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The VLASOV Movement 1940-45

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1. Its Origins

The formation of a Russian national anti-Communist movement with the nucleus of an administration, with armed forces and with elaborate apparatus for propaganda and ideological discussion, as we know it in the later stages of the last war, was not the result of a planned action of a single mind and will. It emerged as the result of circumstances which none of the protagonists had clearly foreseen or expected a few weeks before and it is this feature of it which makes it particularly interesting. It should not be regarded as a planned action of the German High Command, nor as one forced upon them by some Russian groups which at a later date played an important part in the movement.

Two days before the outbreak of the German-Soviet war Rosenberg made a speech to "those most closely connected with the Eastern problem" in which he laid down the principles of German policy towards Russia as well as the general lines on which he intended to carry out the mandate given him by the Führer for the administration of the Eastern area. "There is no doubt," he says, "that we are faced by two strongly opposed conceptions of the East: the common one and the one which I believe we should follow". The common one amounted to a will to fight the war against the Red Army to a victorious end and then restore the Russian realm under German leadership and with German assistance so that its natural resources would be subordinated to the German policy of world hegemony. This idea Rosenberg rejected completely. "The call of the East", the fascination which Rosenberg himself admitted to have experienced, appeared to him a danger for the future relations between Russia and a victorious Germany. Those Germans who would go as organisers, advisers, controllers and administrators to Russia, would necessarily succumb to the danger of the Magic of the East; they would be fascinated by the magnitude of the opportunities which the activity in the East opened to them, they would (probably themselves and in any case their children) become attached to the East and in fifty years Germany would be faced with the same problem with which it was then at grips, the sole difference being that under German leadership Russia would have become an even more formidable and efficient adversary. This is why Rosenberg decided to abandon the traditional German attitude towards Russia and replace it by a policy of "dismemberment of the Russian realm" based on the fulfilment of the aspirations of Greater Finland, of a Baltic ruled by the Germans, championing the cause of Ukrainian separatists and of the separatists of the Caucasian nations and tribes. What would remain of Russia proper would then suffer an enormous lowering in its standard of life, probably combined with a very considerable decrease in population. This "hard" decision had however to be taken and appeared to Rosenberg to be ideologically justified in view of the racial inferiority of the Russian, who in spite of his charm, intelligence and artistic inclination, lacked in his character the very substance which would make him the equal of the civilized western man.

It would be interesting to know to whom actually the speech of the 20th June, 1941 was addressed and who the "engste beteiligte am Ostproblem" were. The principles and motives of which Rosenberg's speech gave a clear idea remained, however, concealed from persons in very high positions, especially in the army, to whom the occupation of Russia was entrusted in the first place. Strik-Strikfeldt mentioned that neither Fieldmarshal Bock, with whom he was working in close collaboration, nor even von Brauchitch, had any idea of what was planned for Russia. The Führer's speech at the outbreak of hostilities stated vaguely that the struggle was not against the Russian people, but against the Communist regime; but it did not give any intimation of what was

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in store for the population in the occupied territories. Von Bock asked Strik-Strikfeldt a few weeks after the invasion of Russia to go to Berlin and find out in the Ostministerium what was going to happen, but Strik-Strikfeldt was not able to get complete clarity about the intentions of the Ostministerium, in spite of his connections, and was told that this would emerge naturally when the administration of the Reichskommissare would be finally set up.

The reasons for keeping Rosenberg's master plan secret are obvious: he did not want to jeopardize the military effort of the German army by stiffening the resistance of the enemy and playing into the hands of the newly inaugurated patriotic propaganda from Moscow. He also possibly did not want to undermine the morale of German officers who were not in sympathy with the Nazi Weltanschauung and might have scruples about serving as instruments of a policy which was contrary to their conscience and to their aspirations based on the "call of the East", the power of which was so well known to Rosenberg. The effect of this secrecy concerning the ultimate war aims in the East was that the German officers were left to improvise a policy of their own, largely based on the antiquated conception denounced by Rosenberg. In this spirit they began setting up a military administration and making declarations to the bewildered population of the occupied territories, who approached them with the question: "What is going to become of us?"

In order to understand the bewilderment of the population in the summer of 1941 one should bear in mind that the war came to them as a complete surprise. The Soviet press and radio propaganda since the autumn of 1939 had been explaining to the people that the Soviet Union had nothing whatever to do with the "second imperialist war". Criticism of countries under a Nazi or Fascist regime was extremely restrained and the picture given of these countries was not a shade darker than that of the remaining "capitalist world" in which the freedom-loving, toiling masses were oppressed. It was generally known and widely broadcast that, if a war was going to be fought, it would be fought victoriously "on the enemy's territory". It was believed that the Germans had their hands full in the West. This belief was confirmed by the success of Soviet diplomatic action which led to a considerable aggrandizement of the Union in 1939 and 1940 without bloodshed or sacrifices, if one discounts the Soviet-Finnish war. The broadcast of Molotov's speech, which announced the outbreak of hostilities, did little to allay the shock effect of the invasion and there was no authoritative statement until the 3rd July (the first speech by Stalin) by which time large portions of the Soviet Union were occupied by the Germans. The prevailing mood of the population in the Western strip of the Union which had been occupied by the Red Army in 1939-40, was that at last the shortlived reign of terror had ended. Further east, the people met the Germans with an open mind, believing that now that the Communist stage in the history of Russia had come to an end, terms must be found for a modus vivendi with the new military masters. There is ample evidence that inside the Union the prevailing mood was that whatever might happen, "this is going to be the end of the present regime, at least in the form we know it". People in the occupied territories accepted the change as an unforeseen cataclysm after which life had to be organized in a new way. In what way, they had in the great majority no inkling, because they never expected the change to come so suddenly and had no opportunity to discuss what the order of things, which they would prefer to life in the Soviet Union, should be. It took them quite a time to realize that the invader had made no statement of future policy which might become the object of discussion, acceptance or rejection. They were ready to believe any statement made by the local German officer in command and to cooperate with him, provided he showed a human and understanding attitude.

They immediately came out with a number of offers relating to the administration of their district, putting forward their requests and demands and offering their services to secure order, transport and public services. These offers naturally reflected the aspirations of various types of Soviet people and everyone was eager to be the first to put his view forward to the Germans and get their support for the line of policy which he advocated. Some of this rivalry was bitter and might seem surprising to anybody who believes that the population of the Soviet Union has been ground down by 30 /years of the

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years of the Soviet regime to a homogeneous mass. This is by no means true, as is shown by the wide divergence of political views which emerged as soon as a free discussion of political matters was started. The only common denominator was a general anti-Communist attitude which manifested itself in this great "all-national discussion which took place in every peasant hut which had been liberated from the Soviets in every village, town, Ostarbeiter camp, volunteer or partisan detachment, everywhere that the Soviet citizens of yesterday found themselves together". (Draft of the programme of SBONR. Borba, 6.7.49.) In this situation the German army and the administration which followed it found no difficulty in recruiting the necessary numbers of police, municipal workers, burgomeisters and so on, whom they tried to control through the intermediary of Russian emigres, enrolled as interpreters and liaison agents. It took the population only a few weeks, however, to realise that the new situation left no scope for any political activity of theirs, nor for the fulfilment of even the most modest of their aspirations. The tactlessness and stupidity of the Reichskommissars' administration, the wanton and advertised cruelty with which the hardest decisions made in Berlin concerning the requisition of food supplies, labour, deportation of labour to the Reich, extermination of Jews, and so on, were carried out, was fully exposed and deplored by the Germans themselves. There is no necessity to dwell on this point here. Cooperation with the Germans was very soon transformed into a kind of systematic double-crossing. The Russians who approached the Germans trying to influence their policy locally, soon learned that the only argument which would be considered was that of political expediency on a small scale. In order to satisfy any immediate need of the population, or to prevent the carrying out of measures which meant great hardship and actual extermination to the people, one had to argue that this would be the easier, simpler and cheaper way to satisfy the German demands. Professor Grimm, who became a close collaborator of Archbishop Sergius in Riga immediately after the entry of the Germans, has given a vivid picture of this technique. His special interest was in securing religious services in the orthodox communities in the area of the three Baltic States as well as in the Pskov district. The resumption of public worship in places where it had been abandoned for years was originally one of the most cherished manifestations of liberty from Soviet control. People who had little knowledge of the elements of the Christian faith, did not know any prayers and had never read the Gospel, insisted on having churches and getting the sacraments performed as a kind of restitution of their status as persons with a free conscience. This, of course, was not the way things could be put to the Germans. But a few weeks of practical experience persuaded them that the presence of a priest and the interest in the restoration of church life would favourably affect the morale of the population and that much could be won in this way. The same applied to the way in which, in spite of original opposition, the Ostministerium was finally persuaded to dissolve the collective farms and introduce private ownership of the land by the peasants.

Under these circumstances the population soon understood that no improvement of their situation would be possible during the war and without the interference of a strong political force which would counter-balance and oppose the arbitrary rule of the Reichskommissars' administration and the S.D. This drove the politically-conscious elements in the population towards the German army. As soldiers of the German army or even of the Waffen S.S. they were to a certain extent protected from being treated as 'Untermensch'. As commanders of detachments of Russian volunteers performing police duties, rounding up detachments of the Red Army which were cut off by the swift advance of the Germans and roamed the forests, and rendering other services, officers were in a position to protect villages from senseless punitive expeditions and the arbitrariness of the local German Commissars. The Koch administration complained bitterly of being impeded in its policy of ruthless exploitation by such volunteer detachments. The army which had no clear idea of Rosenberg's intention had no scruples in accepting the services of energetic Russians who volunteered either individually or collectively and were placed under the command of the respective Army Groups. A number of such individual actions in the formation of Russian volunteer detachments by various Army Groups have been reported. The officers of the German army who took such action were

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well informed of the national and political aspirations of their detachments. They knew, or soon learned, that these aspirations were incompatible with the line which the Party took, but for various reasons, military expediency or political sympathy, they tried to keep their action quiet, camouflaging these detachments as auxiliary groups and using the expediency argument when they were found out. Such detachments were usually not larger than a battalion; occasionally they reached the strength of a regiment. In certain German detachments the percentage of former Soviet citizens reached 50%. (Sotsialistichesky Vestnik - December 1944).

The German officers who were engaged in forming these detachments belonged to a certain type which is characteristic of the dissident German in the last war. Many of them were closely connected with the circles which took part in the conspiracy of 20th July, 1944. There has been an attempt made by Karl Michel to explain the whole formation of the Russian volunteer detachments as a kind of sideshow of the Great Stauffenberg Plan for the overthrow of Hitler and Stalin and the establishment of a democratic world government. It has been laid down in a book "Ost und West, der Ruf Stauffenbergs" (Thomas-Verlag Zurich, 1947). The book is not reliable as a source and has been much attacked in the German press as well as by former Vlasovites. There is no documentary support for the view Michel puts forward, but it is beyond doubt that much was done by dissident German officers in winning the confidence of those Russians who decided to join the German army in spite of the policy pursued by the occupation authorities. Many of those were of Baltic extraction; some, like Generals Kbsting and Aschenbrenner, knew Russia in one capacity or another in the years between the wars. They were all free of the 'Untermensch' psychosis which made any personal contact impossible and they were therefore looked upon by the men as their fatherly commanders. In their relations with the Russian officers whom they employed there was always a silent understanding that after the overthrow of Stalin, the end would come of the inhuman and anti-Christian Nazi plans for Russia.

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One of the outstanding figures connected with the formation of these Russian detachments was Captain W.K. Strik-Strikfeldt (see note on his biography). At the beginning of the Russian campaign he was asked by Field-marshal Bock, with whose brother he was on terms of close friendship, to investigate the psychology and political moods of the population of the occupied territories. He was given every facility and protection against interference from Party quarters in his widespread travels. Knowing nothing of the general lines accepted by Hitler he encouraged the formation of Russian local administration wherever he went and in September 1941 he organised something of a provisional Russian government (in Smolensk). He presented the plan for the work of this government to Fieldmarshals Bock and Brauchitch and to the Ostministerium for approval by Hitler and waited for a favourable answer. He claimed to have the full support of the Generals. When the reply finally came, it merely said that there would be no answer. Strik-Strikfeldt was not discouraged and he presented Brauchitch in 1941 with a memorandum in which he argued that the war could only be won with the support of all Russian anti-communist forces which should be allowed to organise themselves into an allied Russian army. This memorandum, the text of which it would be interesting to see, Brauchitch ordered to be worked out immediately and in his comment said: "Kann Kriegentscheidend werden" (Strik-Strikfeldt). Brauchitch was however dismissed only a few days later and there could be no question of pursuing such a bold line under Hitler. But here again Strik-Strikfeldt did not give in. With Keitel's permission he attempted the organisation of a Russian army recruited mainly from prisoners of war in Ossinovka. It was planned to enrol something like 50 - 80,000 men under the command of a Russian emigre Colonel with democratic leanings who had been living in Germany and working as a driver. The army was dressed in Soviet uniforms with special badges, and was supposed to become an independent unit of the Russian National Peoples Army, in the framework of the Northern Group of the German army. In the autumn of 1942 there was an inspection by an SS General von Sievert. The Russian Colonel was dismissed for the nationalist course he had taken and it was announced that the army would be dressed in German uniforms. There was a rebellion, some of the men defected to the partisans, and the whole attempt fell through (August 1942). Even then Strik-Strikfeldt did not surrender. One of his main concerns was at that time the fate of the

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Russian prisoners of war, who were being exterminated on a scale comparable only to the mass extermination of the Jews in the Third Reich. Both Bornheim and Rosenberg admit that of the two million six hundred thousand Red Army prisoners taken in the first six months of the war only a few hundred thousand had survived by 1942. The deaths were due to the complete lack of food and to exposure. One of the measures which most shocked the people in the occupied territories was the order forbidding the population to bring food to the enclosures (for that was what the camps were in fact) where the prisoners were kept. Professor Oberlander has mentioned a camp in Uman where in the summer of 1941 men were dying by the hundred from lack of water. All this fired Strik-Strikfeldt's desire to help, but only in a few cases did he persuade the officers in charge to organize the supply of food to the prisoners by the surrounding villages. (Strik-Strikfeldt mentioned a case when Fieldmarshal Bock agreed to come with him one morning to a Prisoner of War camp to see scores of corpses of men who had died during the night being carted away.) Thus to a humanitarian motive: that of saving the lives of perhaps millions of men was added the political motive of forming a Russian army which would catch in its sails the wind of patriotic feeling coming from the Soviet Union. It seems that in 1942 Strik-Strikfeldt abandoned his attempts to organize the civilian population in the occupied territories and concentrated on the prisoners where his activity was fully covered by high military authority. It was on one of his visits to a Prisoner of War camp that he met General Vlasov in Vinnitsa. This association became the determining factor in the emergence of the Vlasov movement.

11. General Vlasov

Vlasov's personality, biography and ideology has become the central point of all investigations connected with the anti-Soviet military and political activity of the Germans in Russia and German-occupied territories during the last war. The best account of it is given by Nikolaevsky in Nos. 18 and 19 of the "Novyi Zhurnal". When, after two years of silence and inactivity in 1945-46, the remnants of the Movement began to re-organise themselves in Germany, they rallied round Vlasov's name which still remains the symbol to which the allegiance of his former collaborators belong. It must be admitted that the prominence of Vlasov's personality, as it is being formed by his post-war historiographers, is apt to conceal certain aspects of the Movement with which his name is connected and unduly simplifies the perspective of its development. The facts of his biography, as reported in the official version published for the ROA and checked by Nikolaevski, are as follows:

Andrey Andreyevich Vlasov was born the son of a well-to-do peasant of the Nizhni-Novgorod province in 1900. His primary and secondary education he received in a church school and at a priests' seminary. In 1917 he went to the University in Nizhni Novgorod, which means that he had decided not to follow an ecclesiastical career. In 1918 he joined the Red Army and fought against the Whites on the Don and the Manyeh. He pursued a military career in the Red Army and in 1930, after having completed his studies at the Frunze Military Academy in Moscow, he joined the Communist Party. He worked at the Headquarters of the Military Districts in Leningrad and Kiev in the early thirties where he must have met a number of officers implicated in the Tukhachevsky affair, in particular Yakir. In 1937 he was appointed assistant to General Cherepanov, the Military Adviser to Chiang Kai-shek. Cherepanov was recalled to the Union and perished in one of the purges. Vlasov remained in charge of the Military Mission. Nikolaevsky reports that during his stay in China Vlasov developed a strong dislike for the British which it was difficult for his friends to dispel, but this is not confirmed by the sources from whom Nikolaevsky got most of his information. Strik-Strikfeldt believed quite the contrary: that Vlasov's stay in China was of great educational value to him and widened his outlook on world affairs. Strik-Strikfeldt tried to explain Vlasov's so-called anti-British feelings as part of the unavoidable tribute he was bound to pay to the general line of official German propaganda during the war. (It would be of some interest to find out who the British military advisors with Chiang Kai-shek were in 1937 and whether they remember any contact with their Russian opposite numbers). In 1939 Vlasov was recalled to Russia and became Commander of the 99th Fusilier

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(Shalkovaya) Division. He distinguished himself in the 1939 Autumn manoeuvres and became a kind of Stakhanov in military matters. It is part of the system of Soviet propaganda to foster efficiency in a certain branch of industry, transport, agriculture and so on, by giving prominence to the name of an individual who is held as an example of outstanding effort and achievement in his special field. Something of the kind happened to Vlasov. Such ideas as the training of troops in battle conditions were connected with his name and he was quoted frequently in the "Krasnaya Zvezda" (Red Star) in 1940 as a protagonist of the new technique in training troops. Articles signed by him were published by the People's Commissariat of Defence. According to Nikolaevsky, Vlasov was not however satisfied with propagating new military ideas, but started an attack on the system of political education in the army, in which he championed the very bold and heretical idea that political propaganda should be subordinated to military efficiency. By that time (Autumn 1940) his immediate superior was General Zhukov who gave him full support in his efforts to reform both the technical and political training of the Red Army. The important point was that Vlasov's name had become well known through the "Krasnaya Zvezda", where he was frequently mentioned at the beginning of the war, to wide circles of the armed forces. At the outbreak of war he was already a Major General in command of the 4th Motor-mechanized Corps in Lvoff. After the retreat from Galicia he became the Commander of the Kiev Garrison and of the 37th Army which defended Kiev. The city was, however, outflanked and Vlasov had to carry out an extremely difficult retreat during which he was wounded. After Zhukov was charged with the defence of Moscow, Vlasov was transferred to the 20th Army where he took part in the defence of the capital in the district Moscow-Rzhev. All these facts and many more, can be easily checked against available printed material. The following episodes of Vlasov's biography are however much more difficult to disengage from legend and biographic romance. The account given by Nikolaevsky is not very reliable. It seems, however, that Vlasov was put in charge of the 2nd Shock Army which took up position on the Volkov front in the early spring of 1942. This army was very well equipped and it was planned to open the Volkov front on a width of about 2 kilometres and let the motorized troops with all the heavy equipment break through the German lines and link up with the garrison of Leningrad. Before Vlasov took command he was summoned to the Kremlin where he was briefed for the operation by Stalin himself. The form this interview took shocked Vlasov.. He was already accustomed to be regarded as the saviour of Moscow and a man of some importance. His relations with his superiors were always in the correct manner of officers' comradeship. In the Kremlin he was ushered into a conference room and remained standing while Stalin, Beriya and a third person (either Molotov or Voroshilov) remained seated all through the interview. He was given orders and told of the extreme importance of the task entrusted to him, but was not asked his opinion. He left by plane for the front where he had already been appointed assistant to Meretzkov. The situation he found there was not to his liking. The equipment which was given to him and was to be taken in the raid operation, included heavy artillery. Vlasov refused to take this with him. He noticed that his decision caused some discontent and he was reproached for showing lack of confidence in the success of the operation. At the same time he received news from Moscow that his flat there had been searched by the NKVD in his absence. Vlasov explained this action by the fact that the NKVD might have got wind of his having belonged to a conspiratorial group to which he referred as "Soyuz Russkikh Offitserov" (Union of Russian Officers). This explanation and the whole story of the search of the flat is doubtful. In any case the existence of this "Union of Russian Officers" is not confirmed from any other source. What remains of all these stories is that there had been some friction between Vlasov and the Kremlin at the time when he was forced to take over the command of the 2nd Shock Army. One source, who defected in 1949, has reported that he was attached to one of the flanks of the Volkov front which was to make way when the 2nd Army crossed the line to start its raid in the rear of the Germans. He said that the general opinion among the officers was that the plan must have been betrayed because the 2nd Army met an extremely heavy German artillery concentration as soon as it crossed the front line. The corridor by which communications were maintained with Meretzkov's group was narrowed down to 100 metres at some places, so that not even telephone lines could be laid. Ten days after the break through of the 2nd Army all normal liaison was severed and it was presumed that the Shock Army had suffered disaster.

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The real story

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The real story of the destruction of the 2nd Army must be contained in the German military reports of that time. It is, however, clear that Vlasov fought to the bitter end. There are stories of Stalin having twice sent an aeroplane to pick up Vlasov, but either no contact could be made, or Vlasov refused to leave the remnants of his troops and his return to Moscow did not materialise. The remains of his army partly joined the partisans, but the German concentration in that theatre had become so powerful that there was not much scope for partisan activity. Some time in the spring of 1942, Vlasov found himself isolated with another officer and a nurse, Maria Volkova, who used to be his housekeeper and was attending to his wound. The story of how Vlasov was taken prisoner, told by Nikolaevsky, differs from the one retailed by Orlov, according to which the officer who was with Vlasov was wounded and sick and could not carry on any further as their food supplies had run out. Vlasov made a bed for him in the forest and covered him with his general's greatcoat. Then he went with Volkova to a neighbouring village to ask for bread. He fell into the hands of the German-appointed burgomeister who locked him up in a stable. There were no Germans in the village. In the meantime the officer whom he had left in the forest died, his body was discovered and reported to the German authorities. Two German officers were despatched to identify the body of the dead Russian general, as he was believed to be, because of the identification marks on the greatcoat. These officers drove through the village where Vlasov was interned and his presence was reported to them. When they came to the stable where Vlasov was locked up, he told them immediately "Nicht schiessen, ich General Vlasov". He was immediately brought to General Lindemann with whom he spent some time. As we know from other sources Lindemann was greatly interested in using Russians for military purposes. In the minutes of the meeting at Berghof on 8th June 1943 Schmund reported to Hitler, Keitel and Zeitzler that Lindemann was employing 47,000 Russians as auxiliary troops in his sector of the front. Lindemann asked Vlasov why he carried on the struggle when it had become hopeless and was impressed by Vlasov's answer "what would you have done in my place?" Source has seen no evidence showing that, in spite of the correct reception accorded to Vlasov, he had been in touch with or tried to contact those Germans who were connected with the Tukhachevski conspiracy, such as Generals Aschenbrenner and Kuestring. This seems to indicate that Vlasov had not previously thought of defecting to the Germans, in spite of some feeling of bitterness towards the Soviet Government which must have existed at that time and which might have influenced his decision not to return to Moscow in the planes sent by Stalin, or by filtering through with partisan detachments with which he maintained contact all through the fight.

As other generals, Vlasov was sent to a prisoner of war camp in Vinnitsa where he was kept under reasonably tolerable conditions. It is there that he was discovered by Strik-Strikfeldt together with his later collaborator General Malyshkin.

Captain Strik-Strikfeldt was considered to be the German Army specialist on Russian psychology and as such had certain powers which he used in order to pursue a policy of his own, camouflaging it as necessary psychological experiments with Soviet prisoners of war. He had facilities for picking out personally and through agents, prisoners of war who might be used for propaganda. They were brought to Berlin and directed to the various propaganda schools, the most important of which was established in Dabendorf. At first sight Strik-Strikfeldt understood the value of Vlasov for his purposes and brought him to Berlin, together with Malyshkin. There they met Zykov, Zhilenkov, Trukhin and the other later members of the KONR. Strik-Strikfeldt did not, however, send Vlasov to one of the propaganda schools. A small episode might throw some light on the conditions in which Strik-Strikfeldt's enterprise was planned at the beginning. Vlasov had to have civilian clothes and these were difficult to get because of his exceptional height. Strik-Strikfeldt, however, managed to collect a few things from his friends and brought them to Vlasov, whose pride was wounded by having to wear secondhand clothes. Strik-Strikfeldt comforted him by saying "You see, had we been in England, I would no doubt have got a cheque to pay your tailor and things would look much more dignified, but never mind, there is an enormous advantage in knowing that you are not in the pay of anybody and that you remain an independent agent". The lesson of this episode is that from the beginning Vlasov found himself connected with Germans who were themselves conspiring against the regime and who considered him to be in the same position towards his government as they were vis-a-vis

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were vis-a-vis the Nazis. The understanding between Vlasov and Strik-Strikfeldt was complete, in spite of the great divergence of education, moral standards and political tact. Strik-Strikfeldt had certain difficulties in the beginning in persuading Vlasov to join him in his efforts to organize a purely Russian anti-Communist movement. According to Strik-Strikfeldt, the argument which proved decisive was the fate of the prisoners of war. "Even if nothing comes of our efforts" he said "except the saving of so many prisoners' lives who are perishing in the enclosures, it will be worth your while to undertake this effort." To this argument Vlasov surrendered. The unique value of Vlasov to the organization of a popular anti-Communist movement in Russia was not so much his outstanding abilities as the fact that his name was widely known to the masses in the Soviet Union and in the Red Army. No amount of Soviet abuse and propaganda against the "disreputable Judas Vlasov" could wipe out the memory of a man who fought against the system of political commissars, who insisted on an increase in the efficiency of the Red Army and who was a hero of the defence of Moscow. Strik-Strikfeldt's task was now to find a means by which Vlasov's voice could reach the wide masses of the Russian people. As far as propaganda to the Red Army was concerned, Strik-Strikfeldt could rely on the complete co-operation of all parts of the German war machine. This was the best way to camouflage the other part of the work which consisted in organizing the prisoners of war, the population of the occupied territories and the ever-increasing numbers of the Ostarbeiter in the Reich and in the West. On the 27th December, 1942 Vlasov issued an open letter to his Russian compatriots urging them to take up the struggle against Communism. This document, a complete copy of which it is hoped to obtain (Nikolaevsky knew only excerpts from it) contains already the essential elements of the ideology which formed the basis of the Smolensk 13 points (see Appendix IV) and much later of the Prague Manifesto. After denouncing the Moscow regime as the dictatorship of a fanatical group to whom the interests of the Russian people were alien, Vlasov explained the war as a machination of Stalin who had sold the interests of the Russian people to the Anglo-Americans. He exposed the mendacity of the patriotic propaganda of Moscow and appealed for the overthrow of the Soviet regime and "the completion of the national revolution" out of which a new Russia would emerge, which would live in peace with the nations of Europe and in particular with the great German people. "In this struggle for our future I openly and honestly am ready to pursue a policy of an alliance with Germany." This appeal was published in various papers edited by the propaganda schools and evoked a great response in the Prisoner of War camps and among the Ostarbeiter. Hundreds of letters poured in offering support and asking for an opportunity to participate in the movement inaugurated by Vlasov. In estimating such material one has to understand the innuendos of Vlasov's phraseology. What might appear a subservient attitude now, was in fact one of extreme arrogance at that time, viewed from the standpoint of the Nazis of the Ostministerium. An Alliance with Germany meant in a way a claim to an independent status which was quite unheard of on the part of an 'Untermensch.' There was also no mention of acceptance of the National Socialist doctrine by Vlasov. On the contrary, cleverly quoting Hitler's speech, according to which National Socialism was not an export product, Vlasov pointed out that the new Russia would be organized on lines different from those of National Socialist Germany. The status of an ally was always interpreted as one which creates obligations but also establishes claims on the other partner. Should the Germans persist in a policy of enmity towards the New Russia, the alliance would be de facto denounced by them and Vlasov would feel himself free to act independently. All these innuendos were clearly understood by the Russian supporters of Vlasov, as well as by the Nazis themselves. In this game of double-crossing by shifting the meaning of propaganda slogans, the Nazis hoped in some measure to heal the wounded nationalist feelings of the Russians and break that passive resistance which weighed heavily on all their attempts to make effective use of the occupied territories for their war effort. By the same game Strik-Strikfeldt and similar dissident German ideologists intended to strengthen Vlasov's hand and form such a powerful Russian movement that the Eastern plans of Rosenberg and other Nazis would become completely nullified and disappear with other intolerable excesses of Nazism.

For Vlasov, on the other hand, these formulae were a means of appeasing the Germans and saving face in the eyes of the Russians who looked up to him /as the leader

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as the leader of a great national movement. As long as the game was restricted to producing appeals, proclamations, programmes and so on, all parties played according to the rules, but when it came to taking action, the duplicity inherent in the use of an ambiguous phraseology became apparent. Whereas Strik-Strikfeldt and Vlasov intended these proclamations for the people whom they could organize in the occupied territories and in Germany, the Rosenberg administration and the strictly party-controlled SS and SD were willing to spread it exclusively in the front line and beyond it into Soviet territory. The first appeal of Vlasov became known through an oversight of this Nazi control. Strik-Strikfeldt succeeded also in organizing a tour by Vlasov in the occupied territories with the co-operation and connivance of his German officer friends. Vlasov was allowed to travel on the Northern sector of the front and made a number of speeches in towns and villages in the Pskov and Smolensk areas. The success of this tour was as great as that of the first appeal. Vlasov had a gift for catching the mood of the population which felt relieved after liberation from the Soviet regime and at the same time depressed by the conditions established by the Ostministerium administration. The morale of the Russian soldiers serving with the various German groups was heightened and national feelings were roused. All this could not escape the attention of the Nazi administration and indignant reports about the new action to heighten Russian nationalist feelings poured in to the Ostministerium and into Hitler's headquarters. Keitel considered the Vlasov tour a great mistake. Instructions were given to the Russian papers, which were published by various Vertrauensstellen, not to mention Vlasov's name any more and Strik-Strikfeldt himself was on the verge of being arrested. It was about this time (May 1943) that the incident occurred which Nikolaevsky reports in "Noviy Journal" No. 19, page 128. The facts have been confirmed by Strik-Strikfeldt. Despairing of the possibility of getting permission to spread Vlasov propaganda (i.e. his appeal and the 13 points) in the occupied territories, Strik-Strikfeldt persuaded his superiors to have them printed and spread in great numbers behind the Soviet lines. There was no objection to this plan. As soon as permission to spread was obtained, the leaflets, which were printed in anticipation of permission, were given to airmen who intentionally (according to Strik-Strikfeldt) dropped them in various parts of the Central Sector. This was later explained as a technical mistake and the participants were protected by their military superiors. The affair became known and strict measures were taken. The military commanders who were using Russian troops tried to protect them.

Karl Michel reports in his book that about this time General Hellmich and himself were summoned to Berchtesgaden in order to report on the Russian volunteers in the German army. They were received by General Warlimont who accused them of having raised and armed a million men, whose political aims were most unclear and who constituted a dangerous element. In his defence Hellmich quoted statements by the separate Army Group Commanders saying that the disbandment of these volunteer detachments would require replacements by German soldiers amounting to hundreds of thousands and that the moral effect on the population would be unfavourable. Boris Dvinov published in the "Sotsialisticheskii Vestnik" Nos. 11 and 12, 1949 the minutes of a meeting at Berghof in which the formation of military detachments under the leadership of the National Committee, headed by Vlasov, was discussed. Hitler's attitude was quite determined. The propaganda of the National Committee should be used to disrupt the Soviet front and increase the number of deserters, but should not be tolerated on the German side of the front. As the Generals insisted on having Russian volunteers for auxiliary services, these should be used in small formations, but as integral parts of the German Army Groups, and should not be subject to any propaganda or control by Vlasov and his Committee. The formation of larger detachments should not be encouraged and smaller detachments should be enrolled only where this was justified by military expediency. The same measures were applied to the other Eastern national units as to the Russian army. In fact the decisions of June, 1943 did not greatly affect the structure of the Russian detachments on the Eastern Front. After the emergence of Vlasov they all considered themselves to be Vlasovites and to belong to the ROA, but they remained as they were before, i.e. operationally under the command of the German Army Groups to which they belonged and they had no contacts whatever with Vlasov. On the other hand

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the decisions of June 1943 were of some consequence for Vlasov himself and for Strik-Strikfeldt's policy. The whole activity of the Russian National Committee had to be wound up and Strik-Strikfeldt advised some of his Baltic friends, whom he had enrolled for work on the Committee, to leave Berlin at once. (Levitsky). In fact Vlasov and Malyshev lived in a villa in Dahlem in conditions very similar to house arrest with only the members of their household and an officer, a personal friend of Strik-Strikfeldt, in charge of their personal security. It was about this time that Zykov's disappearance produced a depressing effect on the Group. Zykov was an extremely active member of the Vlasov Committee. It was known most confidentially that he was a Jew. This fact was carefully concealed from the SS. On a certain date he was driven away in a car by unidentified men. The Security Police claimed that they might have been Soviet agents. Most of the people concerned with the school in Dabendorf and the paper "Zarya", which was edited by Zykov, believed that he had been eliminated by the Gestapo together with his adjutant.

By this time however the murder of Vlasov and prominent members of his Committee was definitely on the schedule of the Soviet Intelligence Service. There are indications that the partisans were reproached for not having killed Vlasov during his tour of the front during March/April 1942. In this connection there is a long report from Fremdehoere Ost on 22nd July, 1943 on the interrogation of the Soviet spy Semyon Nikolaevich Kapustin. It includes a long schedule of questions to be investigated and an instruction to join the Vlasov Committee, to get employed in the Propaganda Abteilung and in the offices of the papers "Zarya" and "Dobrovolets". One of the main tasks assigned to him was to organize the murder of Vlasov, Malyshev and other members of the Committee. Several plots to kill Vlasov were discovered at that time. In one case, a Russian volunteer in German uniform appeared at the gate of Vlasov's villa and was let in on Vlasov's orders. He engaged the man in conversation and offered him vodka and cucumber, which is the most modest form of hospitality. Dinner of cabbage soup was then served. Later the man confessed that he had come to kill Vlasov and had a loaded revolver on him. He had been told that the General lived in extreme luxury and was haughty, but he was completely won over in the course of conversation. Generally speaking Vlasov had a great gift for inspiring confidence.

In the course of 1943/44, Vlasov lived very quietly in his Dahlem villa, working out the principles of his programme which were tried out in constant discussion in the propaganda school at Dabendorf. At the same time, through the intermediary of Strik-Strikfeldt Vlasov increased the circle of his German contacts. Little is known of his negotiations in high places with Nazis and with the military hierarchy. Whenever he went for an important discussion he avoided taking any of his entourage with him and there are few traces of his interviews with these people. This created great difficulties at a later stage because nothing was known of the promises and pledges of both sides. Some first-hand information on this matter could be got from General Aschenbrenner who claims to have accompanied Vlasov in his interviews with Goering and Goebbels. Aschenbrenner has, however, refused to give any further information when asked what impression Vlasov produced on those people. Another source would be Pastor Schabert who now has a living somewhere in Germany (Bamberg?). He was interpreter in many of Vlasov's negotiations. The full record of this time (and a reliable one) is certainly contained in Strik-Strikfeldt's archives. It was Vlasov's heart's desire to be received by Hitler himself, but all attempts to secure an interview failed and all reports to the contrary must be considered false.

Vlasov was very interested in women and these relations always created complications in his life. It is during this period that a sentimental affair with a German woman played an important part in his interests. Members of his entourage believe that she helped to break Himmler's negative attitude to the Vlasov movement (the Zara-Leandrov documents).

In spite of the fact that during the whole period from June 1943 to August 1944 Vlasov was completely cut off from any official communications with the Russian troops incorporated in the German Army, his popularity among them grew incessantly. They all considered themselves to be Vlasovtzi, though not many had ever seen him and none of them were under his command.

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In a certain sense this situation reflects unfavourably on his reputation as a politician. Russian auxiliary troops were used by the Germans for the suppression of partisans and the mass terrorisation of the population. All these were indiscriminately considered to be Vlasovtsi and their misdeeds were frequently quoted as a proof of the complete subservience of Vlasov to the Germans. There can be no doubt that some of these troops took part in the worst excesses and atrocities which were committed by the Germans in the occupied territories ("Borba" 1949, 6-7, page 30). Neither for these nor for anything which was being done by so-called Vlasovtsi under the German command can Vlasov or the Vlasov Committee be held responsible. Yet, in spite of the absence of any operational or administrative control of the Vlasovtsi in the period of the eclipse 1943/44, Vlasov's ideas spread not only among the Russian soldiers but among the population of the occupied territories and among the Ostarbeiter. The school in Dabendorf produced propagandists who went to the front and spread the ideas which they had learned in the classes and in endless conversations during their stay at this semi-conspiratorial organisation. The propagandists, trained in Dabendorf, were not clever and cynical disruptive agents who had learned to handle propaganda material disintegrating the Red Army. Rather they were converts to certain political ideas in which they genuinely believed and which they were sure would prevail in spite of the fact that, at that time, the Germans had not yet realized their truth. The propagandists brought to the Russian volunteers the message that there was a General Vlasov who was fighting for an independent Russian Army and an independent Russian People's State in the future and whose activities were curbed by fanatical Nazis. This message was widely spread and believed and inspired the volunteers with new political hopes. The constant defeats suffered by the Germans at that time made it increasingly probable in the eyes of these Russians that Vlasov would finally succeed in his efforts to persuade the Germans that Communism in the U.S.S.R. could be overcome only with the help of a Russian People's Army. The emergence of an independent People's State in Russia would then change the whole course of the war and make an understanding with other nations possible. The school in Dabendorf, which was the source of these rumours, was to a large extent the creation of Zykov. It was later successively under the command of Generals Blagoveschenski, Trukhin and Zhilenkov. The organisation and activity of this school are of the greatest importance for understanding the whole movement. There has as yet been no comprehensive report on this subject, but it is hoped to obtain from Colonel Pozdniakov some typed material on Dabendorf which should complete the picture of Vlasov's activities in the period of eclipse. The Germans became increasingly aware of the importance of Vlasov and of his influence during this period. They learned to value his public support of any measures taken by them because they saw how it heightened the morale of the millions of Russians whom they were using either as military forces or as workers. Attempts were made to get his consent to the transfer of Russian troops to the West at the beginning of 1944. Source was told that Vlasov refused, but he was unable to see the letter Vlasov wrote on this question, copies of which spread to several people at that time. Source has no doubt that much light on this question could be thrown by the study of Strik-Strikfeldt's archives. According to Orlov, Vlasov used to make fun of the security measures in the Dahlem villa for which he (Orlov) was responsible, saying that the Germans must protect him because his assassination would cause an immediate general strike of all Ostarbeiter. This may not have been literally true, but the reports on the mood of the Ostarbeiter must have given it some probability in the eyes of the Germans.

The turning point in the Vlasov movement came in the autumn of 1944. Source often put the question to the people he met in Germany: "what were the factors which induced Himmler to receive Vlasov after he had denounced him only a year before?" In August 1943 Himmler had made a speech in which he abused Vlasov and criticised the treatment meted out to him by those "Baltic gentlemen who were running about in Reichswehr uniform", (by which Himmler could have meant only Strik-Strikfeldt and his friends). In that speech (documents of the Nuremberg Trial) Himmler expressed his indignation that German officers could degrade themselves to the extent of attending Vlasov's lectures and being told that Russia could be conquered only with the help of Russians (a thing which Vlasov certainly did not say). What was it that caused the reverse in Himmler's mind? Of course the situation had changed considerably between

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considerably between the autumn of 1943 and 1944. The loss of the occupied territories deprived Rosenberg of his influence in the treatment of the Russian problem. Himmler and the SD had often before shown themselves more amenable to the expediency arguments of various Russian Vertrauensstellen than the Rosenberg administration. Now that Rosenberg could no longer argue that the development of a Russian nationalist movement impeded his administration the Vlasov claims to head all the Russian forces could be reconsidered directly by Himmler without fear of interference from the Ostministerium. He must have had favourable reports of Vlasov personally from Goring, Goebbels and other Nazis to whom Vlasov was introduced by the Generals. He wanted to see the man for himself. Vlasov went to the fatal interview alone and nobody knows what promises were made by both parties. The only agreement which was published concerned the financing of the Vlasov movement and the recognition of Vlasov's authority to use a special current account. Neither at that time, nor at any early date as has been suggested by Wallace Carroll ("Life", Dec. 19th, 1949) did Vlasov sign away the Ukraine and the Caucasus and promise to accept a German protectorate. The Himmler interview in 1944 greatly satisfied both parties. Vlasov was promised operational and administrative command over armed forces amounting to ten Divisions. An understanding was reached about equipment and training of these troops and freedom of political action by the KONR was also promised. A Committee was organised without delay. In return the German control of the movement was taken over Himmler and the SS. This meant severing all official contacts with the Army. The function carried out until then by Strik-Strikfeldt went to a narrow-minded SS man, a certain Oberführer Krüger. Orlov, who had been with Vlasov since the very beginning, had certain scruples about joining the SS. These, however, Vlasov waived with a smile, saying "Never mind, Serezha, one must get enrolled in the Kolchoz" (Nichevo Serezha, nado zapisyvatsia v Kolchoz). Vlasov interpreted his authority to extend over all military formations of the "Peoples of Russia", as his Committee was styled the Committee for the Liberation of the Peoples of Russia. This agreement is however, no proof of a change of heart on the part of Himmler. Immediately after the interview the first misunderstanding with Himmler arose. The minutes which were given to the press were unilaterally altered by the Germans. This infuriated Vlasov. Strik-Strikfeldt supported him and warned him not to give in until the press report had been rectified. Under the threat of Vlasov's resignation from the Committee Himmler sent a rectified version to be published in the Russian papers, but none was issued to the German press. Strik-Strikfeldt warned Vlasov once more not to give in, but this proved too much for the General who was now so engaged in the organisation of his Committee that he was afraid of weakening it by the threat of his resignation. As soon as the question of the formation of the divisions arose, difficulties were made due to the alleged lack of equipment and supplies. The result was that instead of the ten original divisions only three were allowed to be formed. Here again Strik-Strikfeldt urged Vlasov to resign, even at the cost of being imprisoned. Vlasov, however well he knew that he was being double-crossed, decided to stay hoping that as the Germans were getting weaker every day, he might still, in the final stages of the war, become an independent factor and enter into negotiations with the Allies. At that time it was expected and generally believed in Germany that the military clash between the Allies and the Soviet Union was imminent and would follow the collapse of Germany in a very short time. At this point - that is shortly before the Prague Congress - Strik-Strikfeldt parted with Vlasov. They remained personal friends but were politically estranged.

The few weeks following the Himmler interview were dedicated to the organisation of the KONR. From Levitsky source obtained the following general outlay of this organisation and its agencies. The Committee consisted of the Generals Vlasov, Trukhin, Malyshev, Zhilenkov, Zakutny and Meandrov (all hanged on 2nd August 1946), Professor Ivanov (dead?) Professor Rudnev (now in Switzerland) Bogatyrev, Moskvitinov (now in New York) Karpinski, Muzychenko (now Pismenny, in Munich) General V.V. Kreitor, General Turkul (first emigration, now in Germany, politically active), General Balabin (now in Austria), Abramov, Levitsky and Bolkhovskoi. This Committee was far from a debating society. It met mainly to sanction decisions taken by the various departments which were:

1. Vlasov's Personal Chancellery, under Col. Kromiadi.

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2. The Secretariat of the Committee under Levitsky which prepared the agenda of the meetings of the Committee and reported progress and implementing of decisions.
3. The Department of the Cadres under Livontsov, (new emigration).
4. Legal Department, under Professor I.D. Grimm.
5. Ideological Department, under Zaitsev (Solidarist, now writing in the "Possev") and Col. Artemov.
6. Foreign Relations Department, Zherobkov (the German-appointed leader of the Russian emigration in Paris, now rumoured to be in Spain).
7. Church Affairs, under Budzilovich (dead).

All these Departments were organised under the title of Organizatsionnoe Upravleniye (General Administration) and were supervised by General Malyshkin. In addition, there were departments independent of Malyshkin, of which the following were referred to by Levitsky:

Chief Military Administration, under General Trukhin,

Chief Propaganda Administration, under General Zhilenkov and
Cols. Moand'ov and Spiridonov.

Chief Civilian Administration, under General Zakutny.

There was also a Relief Organisation under G.A. Alexeyev, which disposed of very considerable funds (more than a million marks).

The Committee's immediate aims were: firstly, to issue a manifesto with an appeal to all Russians to rally round the Committee for the struggle against Bolshevism and obtain as much recognition as possible from the German authorities, with a view to constituting itself an independent National Government; secondly, to organise and train armed forces which should be sent to the Eastern front at an early date; thirdly, to lay the foundations for a future national administration in Russia after the downfall of the Soviet regime; fourthly, to organise and protect the large number of Ost-arbeiter employed in German industries. The first task was carried out by calling the Congress in Prague at which the manifesto of the Committee was accepted in the solemn atmosphere of the great Hradchin Hall in Prague. In fact, all the speeches which were made there as well as the text of the manifesto, were laid down beforehand. Prague was selected as an appropriate place because it lay technically outside the Reich proper. The Prague Manifesto is of some importance even at present as it is still considered to be the basis of the work of various anti-Soviet groups which claim descent from the Vlasov movement. The Prague meeting was followed by a series of speeches by Vlasov and his collaborators all over Germany. The ideology worked out in Dabendorf emerged into the open and became widely spread among Russians of all categories in the German army and in German industry. The ban was lifted on Vlasov's name in the papers and the whole machinery of propaganda became subordinated to KONR. This work was carried out during the very last days of the Third Reich. Another important manifesto was planned for broadcasting from Prague on the 24th April. Vlasov was to speak himself at the microphone and address the world at large, and in particular the United Nations Conference in San Francisco, pointing out for the first time the position of KONR in the field of international politics. Facilities were requested for the broadcast from Frank in Prague, but he said he could do nothing without permission from Berlin. By the end of April, however, communications with Berlin became disorganised and the address from the Prague radio never materialised. Source heard, however, that Vlasov tried to induce the Czech revolutionary committee in the first days of May to let him use the Prague microphone, but this was also refused. For some important reason the text of the broadcast remained secret. Professor Oberlander, whom source visited in Augsburg, claims to possess it, as he obtained it from Professor Eibel (Philosopher at Vienna University) who assisted Vlasov in the composition of the text. Oberlander promised to send

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promised to send source a copy, but has not yet done so.

The second task of forming the new divisions presented considerable difficulties in the conditions of the general breakdown of the German military machine. By the spring of 1945 the first division was formed and took up position on the Oder Front. It was placed under the orders of General Bunyachenko. There are some memoirs by A. Ossipov in Nos. 276, 278 and 280 of the ROVS Magazine "Chasovoi", giving an account of what happened at the front (quoted by Dvinov in "Sotsialisticheski Vestnik" 1949, No. 12). In April 1945 the Division refused to accept orders from the German High Command, as it had been promised that only orders by Vlasov would be valid and no communication with Vlasov was possible. The Division left the front and moved into Czechoslovakia where, during the 4th to 6th May, they played some part in the uprising in Prague. After a number of skirmishes with the SS for which the Vlasovites were thanked by the Prague revolutionary radio, the Division split and surrendered in separate groups to the Americans. (So far as source can see, this Division was known as the 600th in the German Army. See Zarw/Mearder papers).

A second division, under General Trukhin, was formed in Münzingen in Baden. It never went to the front. A third division was just starting to be formed. There was, besides, an Air Force detachment, numbering some 7-9 thousand men under Col. Maltzev (hanged), who was assisted in his work by General Aschenbrenner of the Luftwaffe. Source asked Aschenbrenner what he thought of this detachment and his answer was "Well, you know, they had just completed their training but they did some quite useful work and were using the latest types of German jet-propelled fighters. There was also an Officers' School under the command of Pozdniakov (?). The Second Division, the Air Detachment and the Officer's School were moved into various places in Southern Bohemia during the closing stages of the war, while the Staffs and the Administration of KONR were concentrated in Karlsbad. It is from these various places that the surrender to the Americans took place.

It would be naive to enquire about the morale of these troops. The general situation had reached a crisis and every man was profoundly worried about his fate. These Vlasov troops, the only ones over which he had operational and administrative control, were made up of Russian volunteers in the German army and in the Waffen SS who managed to join them, as well as from volunteers from the Ostarbeiter camps who managed to disengage themselves from their duties in war industry. Source has heard conflicting reports about the enthusiasm with which the opportunity of joining Vlasov's armed forces was grasped by the Ostarbeiter. Orlov and others told source that the main difficulty was the reluctance of industry to release labour of which they were short and that Vlasov could have easily enrolled two million men from among these Ostarbeiter. They needed, however, military training, equipment and so on for which there was neither time nor supplies. On the other hand, Chernavin, who was manager of works in the Harz which employed about 150 Ostarbeiter, told source that there was little response to the Vlasov propagandists who came over to enrol volunteers. Some 20 to 30 men left out of a total of 150, the others wavered, came to ask his advice and finally remained in the works saying "We did not fight for the Germans when they were victorious. Why should we fight for them when they are beaten?" Source was also told that there was a great deal of double crossing by the Germans. Men who were enrolled into the Vlasov divisions found themselves later side-tracked and forced to join the Waffen SS.

Besides these formations Vlasov claimed to command all other groups belonging to the "Peoples of Russia" and here source learns that he was largely successful. Letters were received from Caucasian detachments and even from Ukrainians, especially those with Social Democratic leanings, asking to join in the armed forces of the KONR. A certain difficulty arose here with the Cossacks. The leading Cossack figure had always been the novelist Ataman P.N. Krasnov. During the war Krasnov commanded the Cossack Corps which operated mainly in Yugoslavia in conjunction with Nedich Chetniks. There were no contacts between Vlasov and Krasnov. After the formation of KONR certain leanings towards Vlasov became noticeable among the Cossacks. In March, 1945 Krasnov published a provocative, open letter to Vlasov asking him whether it was true that he considered himself to be merely a fellow-traveller of the Germans and not a real ally and whether he was ready to give all the necessary guarantees of Cossack

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guarantees of Cossack autonomy. The wording of the last demand was such that it amounted to a claim of self-determination for the Cossack people. Vlasov was placed in a rather embarrassing position by this letter. The wording of his answer is very interesting and goes far to show that he considered himself an ally of Germany only in so far as the struggle against the Communist regime was concerned. This exchange of views is worth studying as it sets in relief the various innuendos of Russian collaboration with the Germans during the last war. Col. Pozdniskov promised source a copy of this document which is difficult to obtain. As a result of this exchange Krasnov refused to join the KONR, but to his great annoyance the Ataman of the Kuban Cossacks, General Naumenko (now in the USA) offered to serve under Vlasov. Krasnov figures in the announcement of the Izvestia 21.8.46. next to Vlasov and his disciples.

As compared with these tasks of immediate importance, the third aim of the Committee - the preparation of a future administration of Russia - was rather an academic affair. Many of the memoranda which were worked out while KONR was in Berlin were destroyed in an air raid. When Professor Grima took over the legal department he concentrated his efforts on organizing the legal aspect of the relations between KONR and the various German authorities, as well as on defining the limits of competence of the various departments of the KONR administration, where there was much overlapping. He told source of the extreme difficulty which he found in making Vlasov understand the necessity of legal order. Momentary expediency always took precedence in his eyes over legal considerations.

The fourth aim of the Committee - the care of the Ostarbeiter - was entrusted to the Department of Civil Affairs under General Zakutny. He was a man of little ability and the real work was carried out by Georgi Konstantinovich Meyer. They were to organize a kind of supervision of the employment of Russian labour in the Reich and work for the improvement of material and cultural conditions of the Ostarbeiter. By the time the organization started working the general conditions had so deteriorated that it is hardly possible to estimate the success of this programme.

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

Literature on the Vlasov Movement

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There is relatively little printed material dealing directly with the Vlasov Movement. The following is a list of sources which have been used in the compilation of the present report or are earmarked for use in the draft of the final report.

In Russian

1. There are two articles by B. Nikolaevsky in the "Noviy Zhurnal", edited by Karpovich, New York, 1948, Vols. XVIII and XIX, entitled "Porazhennost' 1941-1945 Godov i General A.A. Vlasov" (The defeatism of 1941-1945 and General A.A. Vlasov). This is the best account of the Vlasov Movement which has come into my hands. Nikolaevsky worked on material listed in his first article, mainly German-sponsored papers in Russian published during the war. He had besides been in Germany and contacted a number of people who gave him manuscript notes, memoirs, etc. He is still collecting material for a history of the Vlasov Movement. During my stay in Germany I met a number of people who supplied Nikolaevsky with information, such as Tsurikov, Orloff and Pozdnyakov. Others whom Nikolaevsky met belong to the AZODNR or the SAF. He seems to have been particularly intimate with Col. Votlugin (formerly Tanzerov). The articles give an account of the Vlasov Movement up to the middle of 1944. They were to be continued but have stopped appearing. This is probably due to the hostile attitude which Nikolaevsky's political friends, the social democrats in America, manifested against what they believed to be an attempt to whitewash a Nazi quisling, an anti-Soviet and a traitor to the national cause. Nikolaevsky had a serious quarrel with them, answered the attack launched on him by Aronson but stopped publishing the continuation of his research work in order to present it with the maximum weight of evidence in support of his view of the Vlasov Movement. Nikolaevsky does not claim historical accuracy. His report is just a preliminary study. It is however sound and based on an honest effort to ascertain the truth even though Nikolaevsky has been misled in some details by hearsay stories. The articles should be read in connection with the Aronson-Nikolaevsky polemics, published in No. XXI of the "Noviy Zhurnal" New York, 1949.

2. "Sotsialisticheskii Vestnik" for 1948/49, New York, 37 East 15th Street, Room 407.

In various numbers there are references to the Vlasov Movement, the more important of which are two articles by B.D. (Boris Dvinov). In No. 11 and 12, November and December, 1949. Title "Hitler o Vlasovtsakh" (Hitler on the Vlasovites). It has a translation of a conference of Hitler with Keitel, Schmund, Zeitzler and others on the necessity of curbing the Generals' initiative in forming Russian voluntary detachments. Dvinov's attitude towards the Vlasovites is far more negative than Nikolaevsky's. He quotes Wallace Carroll's article in "Life" in support of the rumour that Vlasov had acceded to the German demand to detach the Ukraine and the Caucasus from Russia which does not seem to be substantiated.

3. Much information is contained in the SBONR

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 periodical "BORBA", published in Munich, 1948/49. On the whole this source is reliable, but often naive and extremely partisan. Nos. 6/7 of "BORBA" have the draft of an anti-Communist manifesto. Pages 28-36 throw some light on the history of the Vlasov Movement.

4. "Svobodnoye Slovo" ("Sbornik Perviy, 1946" (La Parole Libre, Recueil Politique Social Littéraire, sous la redaction de S.P. Molgounoff, Boite postal 36, Paris XV.)

On page 19 there is an article entitled "Tragodia Vlasovtsev" (The tragedy of the Vlasovites). The article is one of the first references to the Vlasov Movement in the Russian émigré press. It brings parts of a letter sent by Meandrov from the camp in Platting where he was later delivered to the Soviets, as well as a letter from three other Vlasovites.

5. The magazine "Chassovoi" (La Sentinelle, bi-mensuel organ du mouvement national Russo, directeur B. Orokhoff, Bruxelles boite postal 31, Ixelles, 4) has occasionally material on the Vlasov Movement, in particular Nos. 276, 278 and 280, three sketches by A. Ossipov on the ROD and the First Division of the ROA (quoted by Dvinov).

In French

6. "Les confidences du General Vlasov". J'ai choisi la potence". Edition univers, Paris, copyright 1947.

This is a completely spurious concoction without even an attempt to make it at all plausible to an informed reader. Its interest lies in that it might have become the source of certain legends about Vlasov. A mendacious piece of information can be detected by the fact that the details had been borrowed from this book. The publishing firm which issued it has Communist leanings, but the purpose of bringing on the market such utterly worthless material, the falsity of which can be so easily proved, remains unclear.

In German

7. Karl Michel "Ost und West. Der Ruf Stauffenbergs". Thomas Verlag, Zurich, 1947 (287 pages).

The book purports to give an account of the author's experience as a German officer with Russian volunteers during the last war. Its main thesis is that the Russian volunteer movement was thought by Stauffenberg to be a complementary movement to his own German conspiracy. It is full of sympathy towards the Russian people, speaks highly of the morale of the officers and men who served in the volunteer detachments and who were consciously collaborating with those German officers who intended to overthrow Hitler and National Socialism, re-establish the dignity of man and come to a brotherly understanding with the West. It is most uncomplimentary to Vlasov and to Strik-Strikfeldt who are represented as superficial intriguers who corrupted and misused the idealism of the Russian volunteers who were originally in the service of the great Stauffenberg plan. The real leaders of the volunteers and their real friends were, according to Michel, Generals Helmich and Köstring. All that is highly fanciful. There is no evidence of Stauffenberg's interest in the Vlasov Movement. One source who tried to establish contacts with a German underground organisation which proved to be part of Stauffenberg's conspiracy (on the social democrat circuit), reports that no sympathy was found for this Movement, or anything which might hamper the victorious march of the

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Red Army. The author can hardly speak Russian himself. He was actually under the command of Hollmich and Küstring and handled the administration of Russian volunteers in France. The book reflects the rivalry which existed between Küstring and Strik-Strikfeldt. The latter sponsored the concentration of all Russian forces under Vlasov's command, so that they could be used as a national Russian army in order to start the snow-ball anti-Communist movement in Russia, while Hollmich and Küstring wanted to use them under the command of the Heer for any purposes with which the Generals were in sympathy. The book has been sharply reviewed in "Christ und Welt". Küstring, according to Strik-Strikfeldt, had dissociated himself with the author. Yet when read with caution, the book gives an interesting picture of the extremely complicated intrigue which was going on in the German camp around the enormous and unused opportunities which the Vlasov Movement presented to them.

8. Eugen Gagarin "Die Rückkehr des Kornetts. Erzählung Franz Ehrenwirth Verlag, München, 1948.

This work of fiction of mediocre literary value gives a much more adequate and true to life picture of the mentality of a former Russian White Guard officer who joined the German Army as an interpreter than all the pretentious allegedly documentary work of Michel Gagarin (not a Prince) became an emigre at a relatively late date and had ample opportunities of studying Soviet Russia. His account of the experiences of a Russian in German uniform is based on genuine and detailed information and is an accurate expression of the feelings and the situation in which such people found themselves by one who survived this experience.

9. "Christ und Welt" Stuttgart

This weekly, published by what can be described as a High Church Lutheran group, often gives excellent information about the Soviet Union and Eastern affairs in general. In November/December, 1949, three articles on the Vlasov Movement appeared which are believed to be reliable and well-informed.

10. Very considerable material is contained in the full account of the Nuremberg Trial (Blue edition). The indices are however not much help in identifying the passages in the proceedings and in the documents which bear on the Vlasov Movement. The only method seems to be to plough through all the volumes. The same method seems to be applied by Boris Dvinov of the "Sotsialisticheskii Vestnik" (See 2).

In English

11. Considerable material on the Vlasov Movement is contained in the Digest issued daily by the Monitoring Service of the B.B.C. (the part dealing with German propaganda in Russian). These reports are far from complete and not always accurate. In view, however, of the difficulty of obtaining Vlasov propaganda material during the war, the Monitoring Digest can be used as a secondary source.

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ROD (Russkoe Osvoboditelnoe Dvizhenie) Russian Liberation Movement

Under this name is known the whole of the anti-Communist movement which developed in German-occupied Europe in the last war. It did not comprise the political organisations of the old emigration, nor the Russian National Socialist Party, nor the N.T.S. It was the political force behind the Russian volunteers serving with the German army known as

ROA (Russkaya Osvoboditelnaya Armia) Russian Liberation Army

These were the so-called Vlasovtsi who were under the administrative command first of General Hollmich and later of General Kőstring. The two divisions which were formed in 1944/45 and stood directly under the command of General Vlasov were also commonly known as ROA and should not be confused with the wider meaning of the term.

KONR (Komitet Osvobozhdenia Narodov Rossii) Committee for the Liberation of the Peoples of Russia.

This was the official name of Vlasov's organisation which was properly constituted after his agreement with Himmler and came into the open at the Prague Congress (Nov. 14th, 1944). The feature NR at the end is significant. The Committee was not a Russian Committee of Liberation, but pretended to unite the efforts of all the nationalities of Russia. This seems to have been the first bone of contention between Vlasov and Himmler. Himmler following the Rosenberg tradition did not want to see the nationality movements under Vlasov's command.

Vlasov's claim to head the liberation movements of all the peoples of Russia came as a surprise to many Germans present at the Prague Congress (Karl Michol). The significant difference between "Russian" and "the Peoples of Russia" in the titles of present-day organisations is somewhat different. Those who style themselves a Movement of the Peoples of Russia accept the principle of federation and consider the nationality question already solved inside the Soviet Union. The position of those who style themselves fighters for the future of Russia (for instance, the Union for the Struggle for the Freedom of Russia of Melgounoff) is less definite on this point.

ATsODNR (Aktivistski Tsentr Osvoboditelno Dvizheniya Narodov Rosii) Centre of Action of the Liberation Movement of the Peoples of Russia

This was to be a centre to co-ordinate the efforts of the organisations which intended to carry on the work of ROD on a new basis and was formed in 1947. It was to unite the

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- (a) SVOD (Soyuz Voinov Osvobozhditel'noye Dvizheniya) Union of Combatants of the Liberation Movement

This was to be a union of former comrades in arms pursuing the aim of mutual assistance and contact.

- (b) SAF (Soyuz Andreyevskogo Flaga) The Union of St. Andrew's Flag.

This was to be a para-military organisation keeping a check on the officers' cadres with a view to rapid mobilisation in case of need. As reported in the text SAF is now divided after a group of former Vlasov officers refused to submit to the rule of General Glazov. This group was known in March 1950 as the Delovaya Opozitsiya (Working Opposition).

- (c) VSMNR (Voevoi Soyuz Molodozhi Narodov Rossii) Fighting Union of the Youth of the Peoples of Russia

In May 1948 the VSMNR group was renamed

- SBONR (Soyuz Borby za Osvobozhdeniya Narodov Rossii) Union for the Struggle for the Liberation of the Peoples of Russia.

The organisation is described in the report in some detail. Neither SAF nor SBONR are now under the control of ASECOR.

- NTS (Natsionalni Trudovoi Soyuz) National Labour Union

This is the name of the movement otherwise known as the "Solidarists". Their programme has been revised after the end of the war and their activities are concentrated around the editorial of the weekly "POSSEV".

League The organisation which is referred to as "The League" is the "League for the struggle for Popular Freedom" (Liga Borby za narodnuyu Svobodu) called into being in the U.S. in March 1949. Its paper is "Gryadushchaya Rossiya" (Coming Russia) edited by Koronsky.

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1.

The full text of the "Smolensk Programme" or "Vlasov's 13 Points" is as follows: (quoted from R.O.S.B. paper on the Vlasov movement USSR/53/49 of July, 1949).

- (1) Abolition of Forced Labour and guarantee to the worker of a genuine right to choose employment conducive to his material well-being.
- (2) Abolition of Collective Farms and an organised transfer of land to private peasant ownership.
- (3) The restoration of trade and domestic handicraft industry, and the creation of opportunities for private initiative to participate in the economic life of the country.
- (4) The creation of opportunities for the intelligentsia to work freely for the good of their country.
- (5) A guarantee of social justice and protection of the workers from any kind of exploitation.
- (6) The introduction for the worker of a genuine right to education, rest and old age pensions.
- (7) Annihilation of the regime of terror and violence, the introduction of genuine freedom of religion, conscience, speech, association, and the press. A guarantee of the inviolability of person and property.
- (8) A guarantee of national freedom.
- (9) Release of all political prisoners of Bolshevism, and the return from prisons and labour-camps to their home countries of all those who have suffered repression for their opposition to the Bolsheviks.
- (10) The restoration at state expense of all towns and villages ruined in the course of the war.
- (11) The restoration of state-owned factories destroyed during the war.
- (12) Refusal to make the payments laid down in the one-sided agreement concluded by Stalin with the Anglo-American capitalists.
(NOTE: The inclusion of this point requires some explanation. At the time when the "programme" was being drawn up, the German radio gave wide publicity to a report that in the north of Norway had been found a wrecked Soviet plane, containing the body of a Soviet diplomatic courier. On the body was found the original copy of a secret agreement, whereby Stalin had surrendered to the Americans in exchange for military aid all the Baku oil, bases at Murmansk etc. ... Naturally this report did not contain a grain of truth, but it made a great impression at the time).
- (13) Guarantee to war victims and their families of a subsistence minimum.

2.

The following extract from the Prague Manifesto (14th November, 1944), published by SBONR as a supplement to "Borba" No.15, contains a list of 14 Points which reflect the Smolensk Programme. The order is changed and Point No.2. is new; but otherwise the Smolensk programme and the Prague Manifesto are substantially the same.

".....In consequence, the representatives of the Peoples of Russia, fully realising their responsibilities before their Peoples, before history and posterity, with the object of organising the common struggle against Bolshevism, have formed the Committee for the Liberation of the Peoples of Russia.

The objective of the Committee for the Liberation of the Peoples of Russia is:

- a). The overthrow of the Stalinist tyranny, the liberation of the Peoples of Russia from the

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THE MOTIVES BEHIND THE
FORMATION OF THE VLASOV MOVEMENT

We have seen that the Vlasov movement developed in circumstances in which all the odds were against it. At the beginning it was the resistance of the all-powerful Rosenberg organisation and the strong prejudice which Hitler felt against any such attempts as a Russian National anti-Communist Army, that hampered its development. It is only due to such men as Strik-Strikfeldt and his officer friends who did not hesitate to use conspiracy, subterfuge and completely insincere expediency arguments that the nucleus of the movement was saved from disaster and a radical purge in 1943. When at last in 1944, after the Himmler agreement, the movement was allowed to come into the open, the odds were even greater. On the one hand, it was the duplicity of the new protector of the movement, Himmler, and the SS officers who were attached to it, which prevented its development; on the other hand it was the catastrophic turn which events took for the German Reich. This is why the history of the movement reads like a series of attempts at great things which petered out into relatively unimportant actions. Those Germans who had an open mind on the Eastern problem soon understood the magnitude of the opportunities they had missed. Typical of this belated understanding is the report of Bräutigam, of the Second Department of the Ostministerium, published in the documents of the Nuremberg Trial. The success of Vlasov's propaganda among prisoners of war and the population of the occupied territories showed him and others that the idea of using millions of prisoners of war, after submitting them to a short re-education course, in the fight against a defeated Red Army might have led to a snowball effect, which would have made the defeat of the Soviet Government inevitable and its control of the Red Army impossible. The Red Army Generals and officers who rallied round Vlasov were a fairly representative cross-section of the Red Army and the prisoners of 1941/42 represented a large part of the Army itself; yet they were all ready to fight against the side which they had served to the best of their abilities only a few weeks before. In the case of the high ranking officers, this readiness was not because they wished to save their lives. They were kept in relatively tolerable conditions and they had every reason to believe that they would survive in this situation until the end of the war. Besides, many of them had proved courageous men who were ready and accustomed to endure great personal hardships for a cause to which they were attached. Nor were they won by bribery and adulation. Vlasov, Trukhin and Malyshevkin understood clearly the fluctuating position which their friend Strik-Strikfeldt had to try to keep steady. Vlasov himself was in no sympathy with National Socialist ideology, nor did he believe in a final victory of Nazi Germany. Having beaten the Germans on the approaches to Moscow, he could have no faith in the invincibility of the German Army. His outlook on world affairs (due to his stay in China in 1937/39) must have made clear to him the magnitude of the task which Hitler had undertaken and by the autumn of 1942, when he pledged his collaboration to Strik-Strikfeldt, he could not have believed he was joining the winning side. Ambition certainly was a determining factor in his behaviour, as it might also have been in that of many of his associates. But the course of action which he chose just as often wounded his pride and humiliated his ambition as it gratified them. He was fully conscious of being considered a traitor, a Quisling and a man who had sold his honour. This was brought home to him not only by the abuse of Soviet propaganda, but directly by some Russian emigrés of the old emigration and by the contemptuous treatment he received from Nazi officials. What then moved him to accept the course of action he did and to enter into association with Strik-Strikfeldt

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of Russia from the Bolshevik system and the restoration to the Peoples of Russia of the rights which they won in the popular revolution of 1917.

- b). To end the war and conclude an honourable peace with Germany.
- c). The creation of a new free popular State without the Bolsheviks and exploiters.

The Committee puts the following main principles as the basis of the new People's State:

- (1) The equality of all the Peoples of Russia and their genuine right to national development, self determination and state independence.
- (2) The foundation of a national labour regime in which all the interests of the state are subordinated to the tasks of raising the welfare and fostering the progress of the nation.
- (3) The preservation of peace and the establishment of friendly relations with all countries and the universal development of international collaboration.
- (4) Broad state measures for strengthening the family and marriage. Genuine equality of rights for women.
- (5) The abolition of Forced Labour and the guarantee to all workers of a genuine right to choose employment conducive to their material well-being, the establishment of payment for all kinds of work in proportions which guarantee the cultural level of life.
- (6) The abolition of Collective Farms and the free transfer of land to private peasant ownership. The freedom of the forms of holding earned by labour. The free exploitation of the products of private labour, the abolition of enforced deliveries and the annulment of obligations to the Soviet authorities.
- (7) The establishment of the inviolability of personal property earned by labour. The restoration of trade, domestic handicraft industry and the creation of opportunities for private initiative
..... to participate in the domestic life of the country.
- (8) The creation of opportunities for the Intelligentsia to work freely for the good of their country.
- (9) The guarantee of social justice and protection of the workers from all exploitation, regardless of their origin and past activity.
- (10) The introduction for all without exception of the genuine right to free education, medical assistance, rest and old age pensions.
- (11) Annihilation of the regime of terror and violence. The abolition of violent removals and mass exiles. The introduction of genuine freedom of religion, conscience, speech, association and the press. The guarantee of the inviolability of person, property and domicile. The equality of all before the law, the independence and public proceedings of the Courts.
- (12) The liberation of the political prisoners of Bolshevism and the return from prisons and labour camps to their homes of all those who were subjected to repression for their struggle against Bolshevism. No revenge and persecution for those who break off the struggle for Stalin and Bolshevism, regardless of whether they conducted the struggle from conviction or compulsion.
- (13) The restoration of state-owned property, destroyed in the course of the war - towns, villages, and state-owned works and factories.
- (14) State insurance of War invalids and their families.

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and his friends?

Service in a responsible position in the Soviet Union requires an enormous effort in controlling one's feelings and thoughts. A man in such a position has no place where he can discuss openly any emotional or intellectual reaction which may arise spontaneously from observation of the facts around him. Should he do so he would soon become known as a waverer, an unreliable element, and a person who cannot be trusted to carry out the decisions of the "Government and Party". This ability to conceal one's spontaneous reactions is highly characteristic of the behaviour of the ambitious and successful Soviet officer or official. Astonishment, spontaneous indignation, even spontaneous interest, have to be controlled under the ~~mask~~ of the unperturbed and determined behaviour which can not be shaken by any factual or verbal argument proving it to be wrong or stupid. "Stoikost (tenacity)" is one of the main virtues required of the Soviet man and especially of one in a responsible position. Tenacity can be demonstrated only by skilful concealment both of the spontaneous reactions of normal human feelings and the activity of a natural intellect. Weaker minds and characters succumb to this treatment to the extent that normal reactions become rudimentary and leave no permanent trace in the memory of the subject. Such people become complete automata. The stronger the personality, however, the more powerful and organised will be the mass of concealed (if not "inhibited") reactions. Under Western conditions almost every reaction of importance finds expression in verbal form. People, even when controlled in public, look up a friend or confide to their family what they have experienced and "what they think of it". Even when this is not possible, people formulate their reactions in silent monologue with themselves. To a very considerable degree all this is impossible in the Soviet Union. Source has the impression that even monologues with oneself are confined to those who do not seek a leading position in public life. For one who is in a responsible position, thoughts on public affairs must follow the forms prescribed by the Party. One has to be trained even at moments when one is left to oneself. It might be of interest to remember that an American journalist who met General Vlasov in 1941 was impressed by his muttering the whole time to himself "we must beat the Fascist invader". In order to give a fair chance of escape to such concealed impressions, reactions, impulses and thoughts, a situation must be brought about where the effort to conceal loses its importance in such vital matters as the preservation of a man's life or the fulfilment of his personal ambitions.

The Soviet Generals who were taken prisoner in the first phase of the war found themselves, often for the first time in their lives, in a situation where there was no need to conceal or control their reactions. Their personal careers were finished, the world in which they had lived was being engulfed in a gigantic cataclysm and they were free to look back on their lives in the way the spirit of a dead man looks back on his earthly existence in a "what happened after death" modern play. More than that: they could converse with each other and compare their reactions, which they would never have dared and never even thought of communicating to each other in what had been their normal life in the U.S.S.R. To their surprise these reactions were very much the same, in spite of the differences of descent, education, career and general outlook. They all were difficult to express or explain to anybody who had not had a long experience of Soviet life. But between themselves these men understood each other with extreme ease. If we try an approximation of what these people told each other it might be something of this kind.

"We have always accepted by our behaviour the legend of a happy and free life of the Soviet people. In fact, we knew that this was not true. We all knew that the standard of living of the mass of people is extremely low; that the sufferings of the peasant class during collectivisation have been immeasurable and many of our relatives have perished in the process of "breaking the kulaks". These sufferings were and are imposed on the Russian people for the sake of establishing a social order in the future, the value of which and the possibility of which we never had an opportunity to discuss and which we were forced to take for granted if

/we wanted to

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we wanted to advance in life, and take part in the administrative machine which runs the country. In fact there is no proof that the sacrifices made by the people and the hardships endured are either necessary to bring about a communist society or are sufficient to achieve such an aim. None of us would ever be allowed to recommend a measure or a line of policy, arguing that that may be the best and cheapest way to achieve the vaguely formulated ideal. The only thing which mattered in our life was to prove our efficiency and our faithfulness to the government. All our contacts

in Soviet high places proved to us that the government was interested in the welfare of the people, the progress of social conditions and the efficiency of the services, only in so far as it meant a strengthening of their power. Any measure which would weaken or jeopardise the grip of the government over the country, however great a value it might represent to the people, was considered treason and was punished as a deviation and a crime. In particular, the government was ready to sacrifice the efficiency of the army by a purge which involved the elimination and death of a number of officers many times greater than that of any possible group of conspirators. In this they made a mistaken calculation because they were not given sufficient time to build up an officers' corps adequate to the task of warding off German aggression. So that in fact the question "what are the people suffering for?" (Za chto stradact narod?) must be answered: "in order to ensure that Stalin and his clique remain in power." There was no amount of suffering, degradation and frustration which the ruling clique would not inflict on the people for the sake of securing and safeguarding their present position. This is why only two attitudes are possible towards them. Either the one which the Generals adopted before the collapse, which was "I have served you honestly and well and do not ask you for your titles to order me about", or the one of uncompromising enmity which could be expressed in the words "however near your conception of what you want to do with Russia may be to my desires and my aspirations, you must go because you will betray every ideal on the basis of which an honest co-operation might be established, the moment you think that securing it will mean weakening or eclipse of your power".

This, according to source, was what the talk of uncompromising rejection of the Soviet regime means in the language of Vlasov, his collaborators and his presentday successors. The Generals were surprised to find that this outbreak of protest and hatred against the regime, which had been so long suppressed, was common to them all. They understood each other almost without words. Their understanding was not based on any ideological affinity. Malyshev was a man with a friendly, Christian outlook on the world. Vlasov had deep philosophical interests, could spend nights in succession in philosophical discussion, wanted to see Berdyaev and finally landed in the hands of a muddle-headed Viennese idealist philosopher. Trukhin was an atheist, an ascetic type. Zhilenkov was a product of Party education and Party career. But they were genuinely at one in their attitude to the Soviet Government.

When source realised the nature of this opposition to the Soviet regime on the part of the Generals, he wondered whether it could be stated that practically any Soviet General, high official or officer, who found himself in the position of Vlasov, would have done the same. He put the question to Strik-Strikfeldt, who looked at him with his candid pastoral look and asked: "Do you want to know whether the British can find a Vlasov?" He told him that that was not quite what he meant, and explained the general bearing of the question. Strik-Strikfeldt's answer was: "From a purely subjective point of view, you are right. Vlasov himself used to say that if he had not acted as he did, any other normal Soviet General would have done so in his place. He was also sure that in given circumstances such men as Rokossovsky or Vatutin would have done so, but" Strik-Strikfeldt went on, "from the point of view of the success of the movement Vlasov was of exceptional value. His name was widely known and his reputation was established inside Russia. People trusted him because he was one whose opposition to the regime had the same basis as their own. There was no need for him to prove that he was not a foreign agent or an enemy of the Soviet regime, because it stood in the way of the restitution of his rights and privileges. In spite of a fairly comfortable career he had suffered that humiliation of his human dignity which, if it is allowed to

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rise and become vocal, will dominate the political conviction of an enormous majority of Soviet people."

The real moving force behind Vlasov's action and the basis of the cohesion which existed, and still exists between him and his followers were the released feelings of opposition and repressed thoughts in the mind of every Soviet citizen living under the Communist régime. These come out in the open as soon as the pressure under which these people live is removed by force of circumstances. The latter point is of some importance. People who belong to the Vlasov Movement will often hint in conversation in a more or less vague manner at certain anti-Soviet activities which they were carrying out in the Soviet Union. It has already been reported that Vlasov himself claimed to have belonged to an opposition Officer's Group "The Union of Russian Officers". This statement was not fully believed by source's informant whose admiration and devotion to Vlasov is great. Source has no doubt that in all these stories a certain process takes place of creating an articulate opposition in the past on the basis of the present articulate opposition. The latent hatred of the régime was certainly there and signs of it might have easily been detected by those who felt it in their surroundings. It is easy when the hatred has become articulate, to present the earlier stage of inarticulate feeling as an active and conscious revolutionary action of which there might have been, in the majority of cases, no trace in reality. The mere fact that a Soviet officer in a high position will show a completely loyal and even enthusiastic attitude to the régime should under no circumstances allow us to believe that, provided the situation changes radically, he will not display exactly the same attitude to the Soviet régime as did Vlasov and his collaborators. Surely a man like General Kvashnin must have had in his mind all the elements, feelings and thoughts which brought about his decision to flee from the Soviet Union at a time when he was carrying out in the most rigid way the policy dictated by the Government during his stay in Berlin. It would only have needed the developing powers of a Strik-Strikfeldt to bring out these feelings and thoughts in such a way that it might have saved the lives of Kvashnin and his family and done a considerable service to the Western cause. On the other hand, had Vlasov been successful during the Second Shock Army operation he would have probably been promoted a Marshal of the Soviet Union and his opposition to the régime might never have become articulate. Most Soviet people are clearly conscious of this circumstance. Pozdniakov told source of his experience of a Soviet Army girl who was taken prisoner and brought to him for interrogation. Dejected and depressed, she stood before him obviously believing that he had the power of life and death over her. He told her the usual story of her having been misled by communist propaganda and asked her to join the Vlasov propagandist school. She looked at him fiercely and said: "You know, Colonel, who you are? You are a traitor." By that time Pozdniakov knew the type and immediately recognised in her a potentially excellent anti-Soviet propagandist - which is what she actually became. Soviet people who have turned anti-communist due to changed circumstances know very well that the switch-over to anti-communist articulate thinking can hardly occur as a result of the spontaneous activity of the subject. They understand this and take it into consideration. The process is, however, irreversible. People who have gone through the change from latent to articulate anti-communism do not easily fall back into the form which preceded this change. The Soviet government is clearly aware of this and no amount of loyalty declarations on the part of these people would dupe the State Police authorities. It is true that there was a certain amount of communist infiltration in the Vlasov movement itself. But there is no doubt that the Police files, the photostatic copies of which source received from Washington, in which Zhilenkov is accused of working for Moscow and other members of the group of Generals are similarly suspected, are just police informers' nonsense. There were, however, cases of communist activity inside the Vlasov movement of which the case of Bushmanov is the most spectacular (See Nikolaevsky). But these people were either Soviet spies sent to carry out diversion work, like Kapustin, and therefore had never undergone the change of heart to which source has referred, or else they were sent with such hatred of the Germans caused by their experience of German atrocities in Russia and among the Ostarbeiter, that they decided to link up with the communists in order to bring down the Reich. All this does not mean, however, that the period of repression of all thought and

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feeling in the Soviet Union leaves no trace on the mentality of an anti-Communist Soviet man. What remains is a feeling of intense fear in the face of the Soviets. When source asked Strik-Strikfeldt's opinion of Vlasov's courage, he said that he was surprised by the courage of the man in face of the Germans. He would have died courageously if hanged by the Germans or the Western Allies, but Vlasov was profoundly conscious of the continuous pressure of fear of the NKVD. This attitude became manifest at the moment of the surrender. When Vlasov officers driving westwards to surrender to the Americans were overtaken and stopped by Red Army men, they would not make use of their arms, but would follow meekly and start negotiations and hope for deliverance by the Allies. Only in the field were they ready to fight. They remained soldiers and were not revolutionary conspirators. It would need a careful selection to choose agents among them who would go back to Russia for subversive revolutionary activity.

We have seen that the basis of the understanding between Vlasov and his supporters was originally negative: the hatred of the Stalin regime and the determination to work for its overthrow. In order to achieve effective cooperation of the widest circles of the Soviet citizens of yesterday there was no need for an elaborate programme for the future of national Russia. The thirteen points of the Smolensk programme reflect this situation. They are a kind of "set the people free" programme, no directed labour, no collective farms, free trade and free work for artisans, independence of intellectual work from state control, social welfare and the protection of labour, abolition of terror, freedom of religion, conscience, speech, meetings and press, liberation of all political prisoners, in a word - a kind of welfare state. This was all that was necessary to rally the masses round Vlasov. No mention of national sovereignty was made, probably in order not to provoke unfavourable reaction from the Rosenberg clique. The refusal to make any payments "on account of the extortionate obligations into which Stalin had entered with the Anglo-American capitalists" could be interpreted as a denunciation of the Lend-Lease agreements and was also introduced to placate German propagandists. As time went on the need was felt for a more defined and positive programme. The Vlasovites looked round for what preparatory work had been done for such a programme by the old Russian emigration. The belief that the Old emigration was doing work of considerable political importance is widespread in Russia, and the real situation was a sober lesson for many of the New emigrants. Contacts between the old emigres and the Vlasov movement were strongly discouraged by the Germans. The German-sponsored Russian emigre organisations were selected from the extreme-right groups of ultra-monarchists and from admirers of the National Socialist order. In Germany the emigration was ruled with a rod of iron by Biskupsky, who had been a personal friend of Hitler since the days of the Munich Putsch in 1922. To Biskupsky and men like him, Vlasov was merely a kind of Bolshevik, not much better than the rest. To Vlasov the subservient pro-Nazi attitude of these groups was intolerable. In particular anti-semitic propaganda, coloured by semi-official statements from Zhilenkov and others, was never included in the official or programme pronouncements. The Nazis on their side understood that the value of the Vlasov movement as a disrupting force would be reduced to nothing if he came out with the extreme reactionary views of a Biskupsky or a Markov Vtoroi, despite the sympathy they felt for these people. Source met in Germany emigres who were working for the Nazis on the lines of Zhorenkov and Biskupsky. Their attitude to the Soviet people is still that they consist of 99% scoundrels and 1% saints. Only a war, in which all the military means of extermination, including the A-bomb should be used, can put this sore on the body of humanity under control. Now that the task of fighting Bolshevism falls to the Anglo-Americans, they should go to war as soon as possible and establish in Russia a regime under the supervision of a Control Commission with strong military support, which would re-educate one or two generations of Russians and reduce the percentage of scoundrels. Meeting this kind of ideology gave a severe shock to Vlasov and his associates. The manner in which they were addressed by these people was profoundly objectionable to them. Even when in 1944 enthusiastic letters of support, including large cheques for the work of KONR were received, Malyshevkin felt indignant at being addressed as "Excellency". As an extreme compliment Vlasov once said to Orlov: "Although you are an emigre, really by your mentality you belong to us. You have been under Soviet rule for a few months in Riga and you know what it is like." There was, however, a group in the emigration which was playing an important role among the younger generation.

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younger generation. This was the NTS, which developed out of the "National Union of Youth of the New Generation". Their history goes back to the Legitimist Group called Mladorossy. In the late twenties they produced a slogan "A Soviet State with a Tsar". They urged the younger generation to study carefully and without prejudice the development of Soviet institutions and give up all plans of personal economic restoration. At the same time they were strong nationalists and supporters of a Monarchist regime. The National Union of Youth dropped the Legitimist principle in its rigid form, but maintained the demand for a close study of Soviet institutions, for active revolutionary work inside Russia and for a strong nationalist trend. Its ideology in the thirties was affected by various factors: the Eurasian theory, ideas of a corporative state as developed by Othmar Spann, admiration for the success of Nazi propaganda, the writings of the brothers Solonovich who had just fled from the Soviet Union and started a violent anti-communist campaign, the ideology of the remnants of the White Armies as represented by the ROVS and the Gallipoliytsy, etc. The NTS worked mainly among Russian emigre youth in their teens, organised scouts and study groups on economic and political questions and elaborated a programme which they submitted to the Germans as the draft of a future constitution of Russia. They were to a certain extent tolerated by the Germans. Youths from their ranks were enrolled in the German army and the SS as interpreters for the East. On the question of their attitude to the Germans, NTS was divided as far as source can remember from his time in Prague (up to 1939), but every opportunity to go to Russia in any capacity was grasped eagerly by the young men, the more so as the alternative would have been work in war industry inside the Reich. Through the intermediary of one of their members (Tregubov) who was a relative of Trukhin, the NTS (National Labour Union) got in touch with the Vlasov Movement. In the publications of the NTS more than anywhere else the ideologists of the Vlasov Movement found ready-made formulas to express their vaguely conceived ideas about the future structure of a National Russian State. And, without doubt, the Solidarist, or NTS, ideology influenced the propaganda and the ideological basis of the Vlasov movement considerably. Trukhin himself became a member of the NTS and a number of NTS activists were employed in the KONR administration. The Prague Manifesto of 14th November, 1944 reproduced the 13 points of the Smolensk programme with the addition of a new one, point 2, which put as one of the aims of KONR the "establishment of a national labour regime under which all the interests of the State would be subordinated to the task of improving the welfare and fostering the progress of the nation". The mention of the "national labour regime" which is the product of NTS or Solidarist ideology should not be taken as an acceptance of the Solidarist programme as a whole by the Vlasov movement. The main difference lay in the tactics by which the overthrow of the communist regime had to be achieved. The Solidarists claimed to play not only a leading part in the coming national revolution, but practically excluded all other anti-communist movements which seemed to them to impede the revolutionary work of the NTS. They claimed to have educated and produced the nucleus of a revolutionary elite which was to head the Russian national revolution and lead it towards the establishment of the "National Labour Regime". This claim was of course not accepted by KONR. What made the Solidarist programme attractive to the Vlasov movement was the idea of a State which aimed at improving the welfare of the masses in Russia and not at an ideological chimera like the establishment of a communist society or the achievement of World Revolution. The contacts of ROD with NTS go back to 1943. In 1944 NTS got into trouble with the Germans and a large number of its members were sent to concentration camps. It is about that time and perhaps not under the pressure of these events, that Trukhin officially resigned from NTS. Nevertheless Vlasov did not lose interest and much was done by the Vlasov movement to obtain the release of those arrested by the Germans. We shall come back to the relations between the Solidarists and the Vlasov movement at a later stage.

More significant than the ideas borrowed from the semi-fascist ideology of NTS, was the insistence of Vlasov that he was going to bring about the completion of the national Russian revolution of the 23rd February, 1917. This was a bold statement to make in the face of the Germans and the extremely reactionary part of the Russian emigration which was then in favour and to which the February and October revolutions were equally odious. The complex motives which determined Vlasov to write the February date on his banner must have been the following: He was not in sympathy with the restoration of the political and economic conditions of the Tsarist regime. He knew that any suspicion that the ROD might pursue the aim of economic restoration, the return of landowners and

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of landowners and factory owners and the re-introduction of class privileges would compromise him in the eyes of the people. Monarchist propaganda might have a certain success among the lowest strata of the peasants, but would never be popular among people of Vlasov's own type and the movement would cease to appeal to the efficient Soviet citizen who takes part in the industrial and administrative apparatus and on whose ultimate collaboration Vlasov relied in the last instance. Secondly, the revolution of February, 1917 was clearly a non-class popular uprising which opened opportunities to all the frustrated forces of the Russian people. It is the release of these curbed and frustrated forces which made his movement popular among those compatriots whom he could reach and he believed that this would become the explosive force which would overthrow the extremely efficient mechanism of oppression in Russia. Of course the revolution of February, 1917 failed through the weakness of the Provisional Government and the usurping of power by the Communist Party. The mistakes of the Provisional Government should not be repeated. The freedom of the people must be maintained and protected by the government against all attempts to usurp it. How this could be done without entrusting powers to the government which would make the freedom of the people illusory, was not clear either from Vlasov's programme and statements, or from the ideology of the Solidarists, or from that of any other system known to source which has been put forward by the Russian emigrations, old and new.

The slogan calling for the completion of the national revolution of 1917 was popular and was rightly understood by Vlasov's followers. On no account did it mean a link-up with the policy of the Provisional Government, but it did mean an appeal to direct political action by the masses, a kind of decentralised popular revolutionary action out of which the New Russia would emerge. It was based on an act of faith in the ability of the Russians to avoid anarchy and produce a Government of the People for the People by the People, provided they had learned the lesson of October, 1917 and would not allow themselves to be lured into serfdom by a fanatical clique pursuing aims which were alien to their aspirations. This faith was nurtured by a conviction that the idea of social justice and human brotherhood is inherent to the Russian soul and that this idea is far superior to anything reached in this direction by the nations of the West. With certain present-day ideologists particularly in the Solidarist movement this faith in the "Russian man" assumes Messianic proportions. The Generals and Colonels of the Vlasov movement were, however, realists. They clearly understood that these admirable Russian qualities, in which they fervently believed, could not produce an ideal society by themselves, but needed protection and guidance.

All this goes far to show that the ideology of the Vlasov movement was nothing like a Russian version of German National Socialism and that it was rooted in and developed out of certain feelings and aspirations which are very widely spread in all strata of Russian society. This is what makes the Vlasov movement such an important event. In the latter stages of the war Vlasov and his collaborators clearly saw that they were on the verge of disaster. In a fatalistic way they accepted it, but source thinks they were right in saying that even if they perished the movement which they had started would go on, not as an organised political force, but as the start of a change of heart inside the Soviet Union, which would finally bring about the downfall of the Communist regime.

As compared with this most important point, the question of Vlasov's subservience to the Germans, of the services his movement rendered to the Germans in their war effort, of his compliance with demands of German propaganda, which have been much debated in the Russian and foreign press, are matters of minor importance. The Nazis, - Hitler, Himmler and Rosenberg - were fully aware that full use of Vlasov as a collaborator could be made only at the cost of giving up their own plan for reorganising the Eastern Area. They understood that if they let him act, he would soon become a force which would be, to speak in their jargon, "a subject and not an object" in the formation of Russia. They never would agree to that. They tolerated his propaganda because they could be persuaded of its disruptive effect on the fighting capacity of the Red Army. It is characteristic that defections of Red Army men to the so-called Vlasov detachments (who in fact were Russian volunteers, not under control of Vlasov but who were carrying out his propaganda across the front line) continued until the latest stages of the war. On the other hand, Russian volunteer groups were cheap and efficient in controlling the occupied territories and in

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territories and in the struggle against the partisans. The main reward or bribe, which was given to them was the hope that at some moment they would become a part of the real Russian Army. As previously stated, Vlasov's organization cannot be held responsible for the excesses committed by some of these detachments, especially in the war against the partisans. And yet there is an amount of guilty conscience among the former participants of the movement for not having done enough to stop German atrocities and excesses during the war. The draft programme of the SBOMR (Borba 1949, 6-7) and the letters of Meandrov from the POW camp in 1946 reflect these feelings. Two things should be borne in mind in connection with this question. The Germans with whom Vlasov was intimately connected (such as Strik-Strikfeldt and Aschenbrenner) were conscious of what was going on, deplored it and went to the furthest possible limit in the Third Reich to counteract it. They argued that the only way to improve the fate of the population in the occupied territories was to increase the political importance of the movement. This could be done not by protesting against single atrocities and acts of cruelty, but by concentrated political action. On the other hand, Soviet Generals were trained in Russia "to mind their own business". They should not be overcriticised for keeping quiet about German atrocities as long as their opposite numbers in the Red Army with whom they shared their political and social education were not expected to raise their voices against the excesses of the NKVD and the concentration camps in the Soviet Union.

There remains one question in this connection about which a word should be said because of the stir it has caused in Russian emigre circles after Nikolaevsky had published his first (and only) two articles on the Vlasov movement in the "Noviy Zhurnal". This is anti-semitism. The absence of any anti-semitic statement in the official pronouncements of the movement is spectacular enough, if one knows the importance attached to anti-semitism by the Nazis and if one compares the Vlasov programme with the pronouncements of Quisling groups in other countries. There is also no doubt that Vlasov was put under strong pressure to "dissociate" himself from the Jews. The concession he made, no doubt reluctantly, was to say that Jews were not considered one of the peoples of Russia for whose liberation ROD was fighting. There is also evidence that there was a certain amount of anti-semitic talk by his collaborators, mainly Zhilenkov, which slipped into the Vlasovite press, the control of which was not entirely in Vlasov's hands. There is certainly anti-semitic feeling in the Soviet Union and anti-semites joined the Vlasov movement. There was no way for Vlasov to control their statements and it would be too much to expect from Vlasov instructions or orders forbidding anti-semitism. Anti-semitic manifestations which certainly occurred during the period 1942/45 were picked upon by the Russian-Jewish social democrats in America to show that Vlasov could in no way be considered a democrat and that he was entirely in the hands of his German masters. Nothing could be more wrong. There were hardly any Jews in the movement because any Russian prisoner suspected of being a Jew was eliminated and killed by the Germans. In the case of Zykov, however, Vlasov was informed that he was a Jew and so were the people in Vlasov's immediate entourage. They warned Zykov to be extremely careful and measures were taken to prevent any photographs of him appearing in the press. The final solution of the "Jewish Question" was left to a time when the movement could become independent of Nazi control and everything was done not to prejudice the movement's future attitude towards Jews in the Soviet Union. The Nazi treatment of Jews in the occupied provinces, in Riga, Slutsk and in the Ukraine, provoked the strongest indignation, even among those Russians who felt strongly against the Jews and the role played by them in supporting the communist regime. This indignation was shared by Vlasov. The touchiness of Aronson and the like on this question is, in source's opinion, a clear case showing that the fear of anti-semitism among Jewish intellectuals can become just as strong a prejudice affecting an impartial judgement in political affairs, as anti-semitism itself. There is no doubt that Vlasov did not add any fuel to the Nazis' anti-semitic fire.

An assessment of the importance and significance of the Vlasov movement would not be complete without a study of the Soviet reaction to it. Source considers that the Soviet Government and the NKVD were the only places in the world which were not surprised by the emergence of the Vlasov movement, and further that they must have been more prepared for this eventuality than the German war machine or the protagonists of the Vlasov movement themselves. They know too well what systematic and untiring efforts must be spent in order

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to curb and exterminate any opposition in the Soviet Union and they must have had no illusions about the development in the mentality of the Soviet people who, through the vicissitudes of war, would find themselves outside their control. Their task was, however, not easy. Any propaganda against Vlasov, from which Soviet people could indirectly learn about the existence and aims of the movement, would have been highly detrimental to Soviet morale. On the other hand, Vlasov propaganda in the occupied territories threatened to compromise the formation of a wide-spread partisan movement in the rear of the German army and had to be counteracted. Moscow was, on the whole, astonishingly well informed of what was going on in the occupied territories and in the POW camps. The Nuremberg papers contain a number of references in which the Nazis express their astonishment at the correct information contained in the first Molotov Note on German atrocities. (1942). Nevertheless, the Soviet espionage system would not rest in peace until it knew every detail of the organization of the Vlasov movement. Orders were given to partisans to collect all possible information about Russian volunteer detachments in 1942 and Vlasov's visit to the occupied territories in the spring of 1943. Later, Soviet agents were sent across the front with assignments to penetrate the Vlasov movement, to carry on disruptive propaganda and to organize the assassination of Vlasov, Malyshev and other members of the Committee. The assassinations seem to have been considered particularly important by the NKVD. They would demonstrate to the Russians outside the permanent control of the NKVD the length of its arm and help to maintain the atmosphere of terror which would prevent the development of articulate anti-Soviet opposition. These plans never succeeded, but murders of volunteer detachment leaders did occur from time to time and there is strong evidence to show that the Archbishop of Riga, Sergius, was killed by Soviet partisans and not, as was claimed after the war, by the Germans themselves. (The very complicated story of this event was told to source by Professor Grimm, but would occupy too much space to relate in this memorandum). In the leaflets issued officially by the Red Army on the Vlasov question, in the articles about Vlasov published in various papers printed for the partisans, there is hardly any polemic against the Vlasov 13 points, the ideological side of the Vlasov movement is completely ignored, he is abused as a traitor, Judas, boot-licker, drunkard and so on, and the point is made that he has sold himself to the Germans and is selling Russian blood to them. Great emphasis is placed on the assertion that to serve Vlasov is to serve a lost cause. Yet Soviet propaganda had to explain away the fact that Vlasov had been the defender of Moscow and a much advertised figure in the Red Army. In some of the articles published in the partisan press the fact of his having commanded the 2nd Shock Army is not denied, but it was said that he had betrayed it to the Germans. "Answer Judas Vlasov, why didn't you return by plane to Moscow as you were ordered, and why did you not join the partisans and fight your way back to the Red Army lines?" In April, 1943 pressure was applied by the NKVD on the Metropolitan of Leningrad, Alexis, to issue a patriotic appeal which was then widely disseminated on the North Western sector of the front. Here again Professor Grimm might have information about the way this document was produced. It contained a large number of quotations demonstrating that patriotism and war service were not contrary to the Christian faith and it then went on to appeal for help to the partisans. "Carry on, brethren, in your meritorious struggle for faith, freedom and the honour of the motherland. Men and women, help with all possible means the partisans in their fight against the enemy, join their ranks, show yourselves to be a people truly devoted to God and your motherland, ready to bring the sacred sacrifice of your life to your faith and love for your cherished homeland and to approximate through your self-sacrifice the highest degree of saintly love which the Heavenly Judge himself has defined." (St. John XV, 13). The NKVD task was made easier by the German treatment of the population in the occupied areas and the contempt with which they treated Vlasov and his associates. From the instructions given to the spy, Kapustin, it is clear, however, that the Soviets never grasped the enormity of the German mistake in the use they could have made of the Vlasov movement and believed that much more scope for action was left to him, than was the fact before the Himmler agreement of 1944. They expected the Germans to organize at least something on their own lines with Paulus and the Free Germany Committee. The most interesting feature, however, is the instructions given to Kapustin to counteract Vlasov propaganda among the Vlasov-controlled groups and the Propaganda School. These show far more clearly than the official leaflets what the NKVD thought of the Vlasov ideology. Kapustin was supposed to join Vlasov's propaganda department and write anti-Stalinist

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articles with a lot of bla-bla about Judaeo-communism (typically enough the NKVD obviously considered anti-semitic propaganda in the Vlasov lines as a favourable factor from their point of view). At the same time he was to pick out suitable individuals among the ROA for disruptive work and to these he was to put over quite a different story: the war had been forced on Russia by the Germans who always (ever since the times of Alexander Nevsky) coveted its riches. The concentration of Soviet troops on the German frontier, preceding the war, was not the initial step for carrying out a plan of world domination by the Soviet Government, but a precautionary measure. It had always been Russia's aim to get hold of the Black Sea straits, but the Germans intended to invade Turkey and take possession of the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles. To prevent this, troops had to be brought to the frontiers. The Russian State was strong and the will of the people had brought about the fulfilment of the sacred desires of the Russian people - opening of churches, dissolution of the Comintern and the abolition of Commissars and political departments in the army. The war had demonstrated the inconsistency of Communism, internationalism and federalism in Russia. Only the Russian people resisted, the other nations were betrayors and after the war there would be only one single indivisible Red Russia. The Communist Party would be dissolved after the war, Russia would become a People's Republic with a People's Party, the President would be Andrei Andreyevich Andreyev who "is in no way compromised" (Vlasov was known among the troops also as Andrei Andreyevich). War conditions did not allow the dissolution of collective farms, but they would be dissolved after the war, just as the Comintern was dissolved. Defectors from the ROA to the Red Army would be well received. The Red Army was getting stronger and was well helped by the Allies with weapons, equipment and food supplies. All mistakes which had been made in the past would be put right without the "help" of foreign invaders.

If one compares the Kapustin instructions with the Vlasov programme one gets a clear idea of what the NKVD thought of the points of Vlasov's propaganda. No attempt was made to counteract it by a revival of communist enthusiasm. They knew too well that once protest had become formulated in the minds of Soviet people, there was no way of overcoming it by argument. The only method with a prospect of success was to take the wind out of Vlasov's sails by obviously mendacious propaganda. The principal trump card of this propaganda was the existence of a Russian State on the side of the Red Army, whereas the ROA was represented as an army without a State, in fact, in the service of the German State. This again confirms Vlasov's political flair for insisting on constituting his Committee as a kind of Provisional Russian Government.

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German Mistakes with the Vlasov Movement

The Germans assumed that they would find a political vacuum in Russia where they would be able to establish any order as they thought fit. They did not make any statement on their intentions concerning Russia and the policy they were going to pursue there, firstly, because they did not think such a statement necessary; secondly, because they feared that their real intentions, if divulged, might be successfully exploited by Soviet propaganda. This immediately aroused suspicion. The people were quite ready to endure the hardships unavoidable in time of war and to accept an explanation for excesses as a temporary evil beyond the control of the responsible authorities. The absence of clearly defined war aims, however, soon helped them discover all the elements of the Rosenberg Plan, i.e. dismemberment of the realm, subjugation of the population and even its reduction by the lowered standards of living, famine and decrease in the birth rate. An additional source of the Germans' unpopularity was the widely-advertised treatment of the Russians as "Untermenschen". In spite of the heavy pressure of police supervision the people of the Soviet Union have been brought up to demand from the administration certain forms of treatment which do not offend their dignity. No signs of servility are demanded from them; all adulation of persons in high positions takes the form of organised spontaneous enthusiasm. To show fear by adopting a servile attitude would amount almost to subversive activity. People are certainly beaten up and tortured at interrogations by the secret police, but this always takes place in private and even mention of it in the open would be a reason for further police persecution. The Germans introduced public beatings and the use of the whip in public places, which shocked the population to the extreme. The Germans were themselves surprised by the Russian reaction to corporal punishment which they said is considered a dishonour and a calamity by people who accept the death penalty with astonishing equanimity. People in the Soviet Union are accustomed to being asked by the administration to cooperate in any measure undertaken by the Government; the Soviet press and radio spare no effort to explain the directives of the government and ask for the cooperation of the people. The German attitude of "do as you are told and don't argue" was absolutely intolerable to the Russians. It coincided in their minds with what they had learned had been the attitude of the squires and capitalists towards the people before the revolution. As an example of the monstrous stupidity of the German attitude towards the Russians we could take the order forbidding the Ostarbeiter to visit cinemas. Stage and screen entertainment for the workers is one of the most powerful means used by the Soviet regime to maintain the morale of the people. To many it has become a psychological necessity and the ban on it was equal to complete destitution. The same total lack of understanding of what was going on in the minds of "liberated Russians" manifested itself in the attitude of the Germans towards the Vlasov movement. The Generals who used Russian volunteer troops urged the responsible authorities to make political concessions to the Russians. For a long time this was, however, deemed quite unnecessary. Why should people who had been oppressed by the NKVD all of a sudden request and even demand political guarantees of freedom and a better future? Were they not satisfied by being liberated and allowed to take part in the struggle against the Kremlin in the ranks of the victorious German Army? The Germans simply could not understand that the repressed political aspirations, which were released as soon as the controls of the NKVD were removed, were more powerful than political claims well-formulated and sanctioned by a long tradition. When confronted by this attitude of the Germans, liberated Russians asked themselves in dismay "Is it for this that we have been suffering so long?" In the minds of many people the prospect of returning to the Soviet regime was a kind of relapse into the chrysalis, into a state in which, under cover of an enforced tyranny, the inner forces of the nation grew and became stronger in expectation of genuine liberation. Under the German regime, when these inner forces came out in the open, the atmosphere would freeze them to death. This was certainly the mood in which many intellectuals in the occupied territories, as well as literate workers, finally decided to give their support to the Soviet-organised partisans. This is also the reason why a German-organised anti-Communist movement never grew to dimensions which would have made it a major factor in the events of the last war. To a certain extent, the German mistake can be explained by the fact that the Nazis did not want the cooperation of the Russians, fearing that it might, at a later date, impede the fulfillment of their ultimate plans. It remains true, however, that they were mistaken /in thinking they

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in thinking they could achieve even the first stage of their plan - the defeat of the Red Army and the Soviet Union - without such cooperation.

However questionable the above conclusions may appear to some readers, it should not be difficult to agree on one point. The reactions in the minds of wide strata of the Soviet population violently withdrawn from the control of the Communist State should be carefully studied, for such an experiment had never taken place before and will possibly not take place again for a long time. They reveal an astonishing readiness to go over to immediate political action and a great capacity to discriminate between suggested lines of political development. The problem is whether any development on the same lines, the liberation of the political initiative of the people, the presence of which the events between 1941-1945 have demonstrated, can be brought about by means other than an invasion of Soviet-held territory: a circumstance which might not occur for a very long time or not occur at all. A study of the history and political development of the Soviet people, who underwent the great experiment of being liberated from the control of the Communist State during the last war, might throw some light on this question.

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VLASOVTSI and other anti-Communist Russians in
the period of the German collapse and the
subsequent deliveries to the Soviet Union.

The event which determined the scope, shape and development of the anti-communist groups of the new emigration was the way in which the surrender of the VLASOV armed formations took place in May, 1945 and the ensuing efforts of the Soviet Government to secure their repatriation as well as that of the Ostarbeiter. Source does not know of any determined attempt to establish contact with the Allies on the part of VLASOV and his collaborators up to the very last days of the war. Colonel POZDNYAKOV told Source that in 1943 he met an Englishman whose name he did not know and who was broadcasting in English from Berlin. He got in touch with him and was told that messages could be transmitted through him to the Allies and thus establish contact. He reported this to VLASOV, who told him to go ahead with these negotiations on the understanding that he, VLASOV, did not know anything about it. POZDNYAKOV claims to have evidence that the British subject in question is now free in London and that he would be able to substantiate this story through this witness. Source did not press for further clarification as POZDNYAKOV had said enough for a check up and because nothing came of these negotiations. Source also heard from a certain LEONTIEV in Hamburg, a rather pathetic and semi-demented individual, who had been editing a Russian paper under the Germans in Libava, that in the latest stages of the Kurland campaign, plans were made for him to go to Sweden and try to contact the Allies through the intermediary of BERNADOTTE. Here again the deterioration of the military situation prevented any development on these lines. The man who had been put at the head of the Foreign Affairs Department of the KONR, ZHEREBKOV, was certainly not the right person to make an approach to the Allies. This is possibly the very reason why he was sponsored by the S.S. for this post. In the later stages the VLASOV Divisions were no longer controlled by the Germans, skirmishes with the S.S. occurred before and after the fighting on the approaches to Prague, and the 2nd Division which had been evacuated from Monzingen to Southern Bohemia was in a state of disintegration. So no organized surrender took place. Only the air detachment, under MALTSEV, numbering at that time some 7,000 men, surrendered with discipline, owing to the action taken by General ASCHENBRENNER, who was assisted in his negotiations with the Americans by Professor OBERLANDER, who crossed the fighting line several times for this purpose. The situation was so confused that at one point, so Source was told, a group of BUNIACHENKO'S Division (the 1st) which pressed towards Pilsen, was believed to be a Red Army detachment by the Americans, who protested that this was an infringement of the demarcation line agreement. Some of the VLASOV detachments were allowed through the American lines with all their weapons and equipment and were only disarmed at a later date. When asked for guarantees

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that they would not be handed over, VLASOVTSI usually heard reassuring statements that as prisoners of war of the American forces they would be under the protection of the U.S.A. Nobody concerned seems to have known for a long time what the specifications of the Yalta agreement were with regard to repatriation, except of course the Soviet authorities who made a strong, organized effort to get as many Soviet citizens as quickly as possible behind the demarcation line. In the case of the VLASOV detachments proper, these specifications were clear enough. Any Soviet citizen who had been on the 1st September, 1939 on Soviet territory and had been enrolled in the German forces was to be delivered to the Soviets. It is surprising enough how many managed to stay behind and avoid repatriation. This could certainly not have been done without the connivance of some of the Allied officers. VLASOVTSI filtered through out of the camps and often hid as Ostarbeiter with German peasants. Others managed to change their identity and become classified as old emigres, Ukrainians from Poland, Poles, Latvians, Lithuanians or Estonians. The Generals were finally all handed over, but officers from the rank of Colonel downwards managed to avoid repatriation in a considerable number of cases. In 1947, when the danger of repatriation by force was over, there were some 40 former VLASOV Colonels in the Munich area alone. The privates of the army were, on the whole, resigned to going back to Russia and took it with typical fatalist equanimity: "after all, they can't shoot us all, we'll have to stay in concentration camps, but others have done so before us", and so on. Yet there were ugly scenes when the actual handing over took place with suicides, physical resistance and much violence on many occasions. The fact that the Allies complied with the Soviet demand and refused to accept the principle of protection of political exiles was not altogether surprising for the VLASOVTSI. For them it was confirmation of the thesis sustained by German propaganda that the Allies were subservient to Stalin, that they preferred the maintenance of a communist regime in Russia to any national Russian State, that all talk about democracy, the restoration of human dignity, and so on, was pure propaganda. There is evidence that some of the "repatriated" VLASOVTSI recovered from the stunning effect of the collapse of 1945 after they had been brought behind the Soviet lines, and put into camps there. In some cases they broke out, roamed the forests, joined other destitute gangs and sometimes filtered back into Western Germany. Those who were taken to Russia were sent to concentration camps for a long term. (see "Borba" 48/49 No.16-1).

The case of Soviet citizens who did not belong to the German armed forces was more complicated. The great majority had gone to Germany as Ostarbeiter. Some had been deported by force; many of them were in their teens. Others were lured by false promises, the most usual being that they would be allowed to work in their special trades and according to their qualifications. Finally, there were a certain number of people who had left of their own accord, either because they had always wanted to escape from the hated "Soviet paradise", or because they were compromised by collaboration with the Germans. There were also a certain number of old emigres from Eastern Europe who had

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fled before the advancing Red Army. The majority of the Ostarbeiter, having sacked the works and provision stores in which they were employed, moved eastwards for repatriation immediately after liberation. In every large group there were a few communists who had been keeping up the morale of these Ostarbeiter with stories that after the victory things in Russia would look quite different. This was very much on the lines of KAPUSTIN'S instructions, previously mentioned. VLASOV propaganda came late to these people who had received such treatment from the Germans that collaboration, even on the lines of an independent KONR programme, became impossible. They were caught up in the rear of the advancing Red Army and were generally closely investigated. The able-bodied were enrolled in the Red Army, where they usually served in special detachments with particularly strict discipline. The later Ostarbeiter started on their journey eastwards, the better ones being used to inform on the rest. Rumours which spread with great rapidity percolated through about the reception such people found at home and further repatriation of waverers became more and more difficult. But Soviet repatriation commissions applied strong pressure. They used every possible means, beginning with adulation and promises and finishing with open threats of persecution of their families and the ultimate threat: "Remember the earth is round, we shall get at you". The policy of UNRRA, which was responsible for the administration of the camps, and of the Allied authorities does not seem to have been consistent in all cases. Source has some written material on the deliveries in various camps which would need closer study; but at least in one case which took place in the D.P. camp Kempton on 12th August, 1945 most revolting scenes must have taken place. People, who by hook or by crook, had been registered as "new emigres", took refuge in the church and were dragged out by American soldiers for delivery to the Soviets. Gross mistakes had been made in identification, some of which were still thrashed out on the sidings before the train left. Other cases where there seem to have been excesses happened in Plattling, Dachau, Bad Eibling and elsewhere. The situation was not much different in the British Zone. Source knows for certain of a case where a man who served as a Russian volunteer in Kurland protested that he had never been a Soviet citizen, that he was born in Prague and was a naturalised Estonian. Yet he was put on a lorry with other Russians to be handed over. When the lorry slowed down, they all jumped off and fled. There was some shooting and 11 out of 40 men were hit. The attitude of the Soviet repatriation commissions was: "deliver them and get it over. We will find out who these people are and will treat them according to their merits".

The process of repatriation dragged on until about the middle of 1946. General MEANDROV could still write messages from the concentration camp in Plattling, where he was interned, hoping against hope for political intervention on his behalf and on behalf of his men. These messages are widely known among those concerned and serve as an indictment against the Allies in the eyes of a great majority of these people. The next shock came in August, 1946 when the short

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announcement in the Soviet press on the hanging of VLASOV and the other Generals became known (see "Izvestia" 2nd August 1946). The political failure of the movement and the tragic end of its leaders did not affect the allegiance of those supporters of VLASOV who remained in the West; but it affected the movement as a whole, which was in a sense beheaded. It is, however, typical that any Russian politician, who intends to win over the remains of the VLASOV Movement, is bound to start with a tribute to his memory and to claim to be VLASOV'S successor. This applies to the Monarchists, such as CHUKHNOV and GLAZENAPF, as well as to staunch democrats such as NIKOLAEVSKY and GUL. Source has never heard a version of the movement which explains it as: "General VLASOV sacrificed us to his ambition by selling us to the Germans". This circumstance is impressive to anybody who knows the wavering character of Russian political allegiances. Official deliveries of D.P.s to the Soviets stopped in the autumn of 1946(?). Nevertheless, Soviet repatriation commissions remained active and maintained their pressure on the Allied authorities. A trickle continued to flow eastwards and at the same time the new emigration ranks were increased by a few who managed to escape from the assembly centres and through new defectors from the Soviet occupation forces. It seems that there is a certain type of Soviet tramp for whom the Iron Curtain does not present any unsurmountable difficulties. These people, who have no valid documents, do not use the roads. Source has seen a shorthand report of the story told by one such tramp, with the idiom preserved, in which he reports his wanderings in the Soviet Zone in 1945/46. He had been arrested by various Soviet authorities four or five times, interned, beaten up and interrogated. A few days later he was again tramping through the woods of Bohemia, Austria and Hungary. These people are the field pest of the D.P.s. Kidnapping of particularly desirable new emigres, who managed to evade repatriation, went on in Germany, Austria, Italy and France far into 1947. It would not surprise anybody very much even if they occurred now.

One of the indirect consequences of the "handing over period", as the time between May 1945 and about the end of 1946 is known, was the official denationalisation of many Russians in various D.P. camps. Whoever could manage to do so, tried to become a native of one of the Western frontier districts of the Soviet Union. Documents were forged on a large scale, partly as a lucrative industry, partly for humanitarian motives. A person who produced such documents in great quantities prided himself to Source on his technique and quoted, as a high example of human brotherhood, the case of a German printer who refused to accept money for the forms he was printing for forgeries. The Ukrainian camps, which accepted Russians with false Ukrainian identities, required from them political "Gleichschaltung". People were beaten up for speaking Russian or falling out with the general line of chauvinist anti-Russian propaganda. The struggle for political leadership in the camps must have been carried out by methods similar to those in the Wild West of America a century ago. Human life continued to matter very little until 1947 in this milieu.

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Gradually things settled down. The camps became more homogenous in their national and political outlook, cultural activities started, church life was organised, schools opened and a new intelligentsia emerged. More and more people made themselves independent and settled down in bombed-out houses, the Bacchanalia of the black-market gave way to more normal means of securing a living and the need for political organization and re-orientation became urgent. Source's investigations were mainly confined to Bavaria where the political life of the new Russian emigration was concentrated. He knows little as yet of the developments in the British Zone where the organization of the camp in Fischbeck, near Hamburg, was characteristic. Most of the discussions and attempts to re-organise political life were concentrated in Munich.

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CONCLUSIONS.

1. The outstanding feature in the behaviour of those Soviet citizens, who were released from control of the Soviet regime by the course of events during the last war, was the swift change in their attitude to the Soviet regime and the emergence of a desire to establish a new order of things in Russia. Men who behaved loyally to the regime all through their lives and who fought honestly in the ranks of the Red Army, turned rabidly anti-Stalinist, anti-Communist and anti-Soviet in a matter of a few weeks, in spite of the hatred, distrust, contempt and repulsion they felt towards the invader. ("I fought honestly in the Red Army" is a standard feature in the statements of Vlasovtsi). The mentality of the average Soviet citizen, and in particular of those who take an active part in the administrative, military and industrial machine of the country, is like a photo plate on which the anti-communist attitude is already registered but needs only the application of a developer to become manifest. The withdrawal of the fear of the secret police and free discussion of their real aspirations is the only developer which is needed. This change of heart was so general and affected people of such different standing and personal careers, that it must be rooted in some wide-spread attitude of the Soviet population which remains concealed even from a competent observer, because Soviet conditions prevent its articulate verbal expression. Nor can it be explained by the temptation of prisoners to save their lives in the inhuman conditions of the German POW camps.

The magnitude and the exceptional character of this phenomenon can be fully appreciated when taken against the background of Russian history. In the previous wars we know nothing of such defeatism as has been observed in the last war and we should have to go back to the sixteenth century and Prince Kurbsky to find a phenomenon parallel to Vlasov.

Soviet people who have been freed from control of the secret police find themselves passionately interested in the destiny of their country and dominated by the desire for political activity. Their repressed reactions remain, however, inarticulate and they easily borrow political ideas from the first source they meet, considering it to be the nearest approximation to what "they really always felt".

2. The Germans were quick to understand the value of Soviet people in whom the anti-communist reaction had been awakened as the best medium for producing and transmitting propaganda to the Red Army. They made wide use of the Vlasov propagandists and obtained excellent results. Even in the latest phases of the war these people managed to attract defectors. No such mechanism for attracting defectors is working at present. This might well explain why the source of defectors dried up as soon as the windfall caused by the disorganised conditions among the Soviet occupation forces in Germany and the demobilisation of Soviet troops, had ceased. Soviet people will not easily defect in order to become an instrument in the hands of a foreign power, the political intentions of which are alien to them and are looked upon with the greatest suspicion. From what happened in the last war, however, we can safely conclude that some might defect in order to join a Russian anti-communist force in the activities of which they can take part and the policy of which they can influence. Source believes that SBONR, which reflects more than other emigre organisations the mentality of the Soviet people, would be particularly suited to issue appeals to join them in their anti-communist work, provided they could give the guarantee that this work is carried out "independently of any foreign imperialism". SBONR could also easily establish a reception and re-education centre for these people.

3. The Germans deprived themselves of the support of a popular mass movement in Russia which would surely have been forthcoming in the initial stages of the war by:

- a) pursuing an occupation policy which shocked the Soviet people by its advertised, wanton and ruthless cruelty;
- b) by keeping their Russian war aims dark and thus opening the door for the worst suspicions. The sooner authoritative statements are made, which would guarantee the peoples of Russia their right to arrange their own affairs on democratic principles and would allay the suspicion that the downfall of the Soviet government will be

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used to establish a regime of political exploitation, the greater will be the effect of anti-communist propaganda and the stronger the mass support for the Western cause in the event of war.

It must be remembered that systematic Soviet propaganda followed by German propaganda, supported furthermore by the unhappy events dealing with the repatriation of Vlasov troops and unwilling Ostarbeiter, have had a cumulative effect and have produced powerful anti-British prejudices among those people, which will have to be dispelled if their goodwill and collaboration is to be won.

4. Owing to the delivery of the Generals to the Soviet Government the whole movement has lost its leadership, which is even more important than the decimation of its rank and file. A further disintegrating factor has been the clumsy handling of these groups by the Americans. The influence of old emigre politicians, especially of those connected with the NTS (Solidarist movement), has hardly been a positive factor in preserving those qualities of former Soviet people which make them precious in establishing contacts and transmitting propaganda to the Soviet side. Nevertheless, there are certain number of people left who have not lost their desire to fight, who have not succumbed to the political ideas of the old emigration, whether monarchist, socialist or solidarist, and who have maintained their cohesion in spite of splitting into small groups. The wish has often been expressed to unite and concentrate all emigre efforts in the anti-communist struggle. This, source believes, is not a necessary pre-requisite of success. Each of the groups into which the new emigration splits, or which they join, can play its part and appeal to potential supporters inside the Soviet Union. Their mutual relations will be finally determined by the weight they will carry with the people inside Russia and this need not be prejudiced by agreements and political bargaining at the present stage.

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